

EXCLUSIVE: Elevate your 2021 events with florals **28**

Food for Fetes: The Miami food scene **74**

SPECIAL EVENTS

THE
SPECIAL
EVENT

Goals!

Highlights from
Catersource +
The Special Event
in Miami

**SHOWTIME
COCKTAILS**

P. 36

THE LIVING END

P. 8

FALL 2021

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Four Expert Tips

When Designing a Corporate Event

By CORT Events

CORT®
EVENTS

1. Provide a Personal Sanctuary

Thinking classroom seats, but much more sophisticated! Providing each of your guests their own club chair and table will gift them the comfortability we've become accustomed to this past year.

Upgrade alert: Incorporate powered tables or chairs so guests can be fully charged and tuned in without having to hunt down rogue outlets throughout the venue.



2. Budget by Headcount Ah, the ominous “B” word! As guest counts and room capacities continue to fluctuate for the foreseeable future (for example, is the venue currently at 50% or 75% capacity?), plan your event furnishings on a “per person” basis, which allows for more accuracy, flexibility and adaptability.

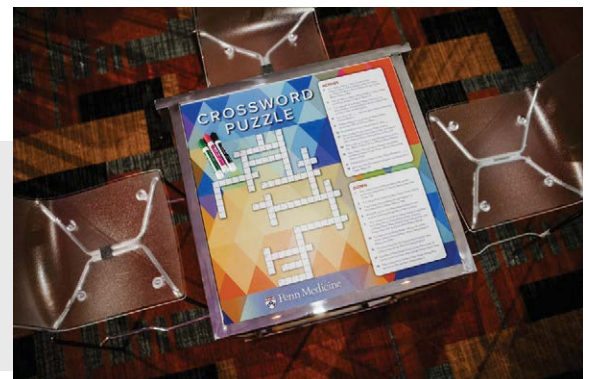


3. Drape, drape, drape!

Expecting a lower guest count than initially projected? Left with way-too-big of a ballroom with no alternatives? Quick and easy solution: close in the room with strategically placed drape and accent lights. Overlay colors for a glamorous border, or simply layer in a way to create green rooms, breakout spaces or staging areas!

4. Brand the Products

Instead of printing out mega-sized banners or decals for signage, use what you've already budgeted for! Get creative with how your client can amplify their brand. Utilize table tops, bar fronts, lighted columns or even pillows you can repurpose!



For more pro tips or to schedule a demo, visit us at cortevents.com.

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FALL 2021 THIS ISSUE

COVER
STORY

14 THE SPECIAL EVENT SOARS!

Catersource + The Special Event made its triumphant return in Miami and was chockful of networking, education, inspiration, and above all, togetherness.

36 Showtime Cocktails

Sippers & spectacle combine to elevate events

68 The Disney Experience

Two industry experts share their insights into bringing the magic of Walt Disney's customer experience to your events

COLUMNS

04 Editor's Page

My favorite moments

33 Conference News

Catersource + The Special Event will be heading west to Anaheim, CA in 2022

84 The Last Word

David Tuter challenges you to be bold in 2021

On the cover: Key Artist Group debuted its newest creations, Living World Statues, during The Special Event's Opening Night Party. Perfectly suited to many types of special events, the amazing Living Statues can be enjoyed by guests in a variety of venues. Photo courtesy Christyl O'Flaherty

DEPARTMENTS

08 Divine Décor

Scene-setting performers can instantly 'wow' guests

12 The Business of Events

How to stay accountable after an industry conference

26 Marketing & Media

Three surprising marketing transformations from COVID-19

28 On Trend

CeCe Todd shares her tips for how to elevate events with florals

74 Food for Fetes

The Special Event's Event Experience placed a keen eye on Miami's food and beverage offerings

78 Confetti

The Special Event's Closing Night Celebration ignites the light

82 As Seen In...

Miami was a sea of smiling faces during Catersource + The Special Event





EDITOR'S PAGE

MY FAVORITE MOMENTS

Our industry is comprised of, as Brett Culp noted in 2020 during Michael Cerbelli's: The Hot List™, "one hundred million moments." One hundred million moments of beauty, of majestic vision, of connection, of friendship, of glory, and yes, of darkness.

He endeavored to remind us that our work often goes unpraised—at times unnoticed—and yet we continue with it because it is our passion.

He is so completely correct.

Putting together Catersource + The Special Event during a pandemic was difficult, and we experienced many of the issues you have had over the past year and a half. These barriers did not break our resolve. Because of that, because we were able to gather safely, we could add more beautiful moments to our work lives. Here are just a few of mine:

- At the Thursday Leadership Lunch, every award recipient thanked those people who supported them throughout their careers and in turn, all received standing ovations. This luncheon was by far one of the most emotional I have ever attended; I wasn't the only one who shed tears. I am thankful I was able to be a part of it.
- The exceptionally talented chef, Keith Lord, told me that if I brought the champagne, he would bring the caviar. On Wednesday afternoon shortly after his hands-on plating class, a few of us were in the Convention Center kitchen—our headquarters for Culinary Experience stage prep. Chef Lord popped open a tin and dabbed a mound onto the area between my thumb and forefinger. We bumped fists and then savored the caviar. Sadly, no time for champagne; it was back to work for me!
- Walking into the SEARCH Foundation event on Wednesday evening, treasurer Frank Puleo said, "I'm so glad you made it! It's an honor to have you here." Me? Those words felt good.
- Hanging at the Loews bar with my friend, Roy Porter, we watched our Italian bartender mix our cocktails as we discussed the flavor profile of Campari. Our mixologist was so delightful, we returned another night with hopes we could be within his talented radius once more.
- Michael Cerbelli reading me the riot act after I broadcast my cellphone number during the Opening General Session. He was literally agog that I'd do something like that. LOL, luv ya, Michael.
- Mary Crafts and Joann Roth-Oseary (among others) thanking me profusely for pulling our conference and tradeshow together. They conveyed such gratitude. I was quick to note, "it takes a village." Truly, my colleagues are miracle workers.

I'm stopping here. I just re-read my bullet points and realized that all my special show moments were because people of exceptional character, talent, and quality made them so. I couldn't hope for anything more...except for one other thing: that I will be able to add to my moments next year in Anaheim, with all of you.

Until then, be strong, stay creative, and live your best lives. Oh! And turn to page 33 for the first emerging details about Anaheim 2022. Cheers!

Kathleen

Kathleen Stoehr

Director of Community & Content Strategy

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Fall 2021 THIS ISSUE

CONTRIBUTORS



Marketing expert
Christie Osborne talks
the three marketing
transformations brought
by COVID-19.



Events business
strategist **Michelle
Loretta** discusses how
to stay accountable
after an industry
conference.



Celebrity event planner
David Tutera shares
his closing thoughts
on the heels of his
appearance during
The Special Event.

catersource® + THE SPECIAL EVENT®

California Dreamin'

The Special Event + Catersource 2022

is happening May 2-5 in Anaheim, CA. We want
you to join us!

We are currently accepting session proposals
for our annual conference in May. Please visit
<https://tse2022.catersource-cfp.com>.

See you in California!

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Corporate

LCA specializes in corporate events of all types - marketing, celebratory, client related, employee morale, and others. Whether held in the hosts' facility, or in an off-premise location, LCA members are able to deliver a high value corporate event experience.

Photo Credit: Catering Creations



Weddings

At its collective portfolio of some of the most desirable wedding venues in the United States and Canada, the LCA caters many thousands of weddings annually. Most LCA members have dedicated wedding specialists on staff, to ensure that this most important day is executed flawlessly, no matter the level of complexity.

Photo Credit: Bonura Hospitality Group



Social

Bar and bat mitzvahs, first communions, quinceañeras, retirements and graduations, and even funerals are all important life cycle events. Superb food and service are crucial to making these events special and memorable, and the LCA is a perfect resource for those products.

Photo Credit: Catering by Michael's



Nonprofits

Galas and fundraisers are key to the success of most charitable ventures - including both financial and membership. The LCA is highly attuned to the needs of most charities, and is a great resource for all the necessary components to make these gala events successful.

Photo Credit: G Catering

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Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, DC, Ontario

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The Living End



When walking into an event, nothing quite gives off the “wow” factor like being greeted by breathtakingly beautiful “living art.” In fact, this unforgettable addition to events falls somewhere between the genres of dance, art, décor, design, and theatre. For your next event proposal, consider how incorporating scene-setting performers as a way to push the boundaries of elegance, sophistication, fun—whatever your goal might be. Your events can be transformed into a place where imagination and art meet reality. —*Amber Kispert* ●

All photos courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos unless otherwise noted

(Above) Living Statues (Key Artist Group) are perfectly suited to many types of special events, creating many breathtaking tableaux. Pictured at The Special Event’s Opening Night Party. (Far right) Custom décor and performance pieces, such as this one from Galaxy Productions for the Closing Night Celebration, enables guests to become a part of the show by combining entertainment, art, technology, and theater.

Steve Kemble was welcomed to the SEARCH Foundation's Signature Event by Cuban-inspired performers.



(Above) Kamileon Productions offers a plethora of "living art" performers, such as this one from The Special Event's Opening Night Party held at the Fillmore Miami Beach.



(Left) Butterflies were part of an event at the San Antonio Botanical Gardens hosted by the CE Group. Photo courtesy the CE Group. (Below) The performance piece from Galaxy Productions during the Closing Night Celebration featured multiple acts, telling a unified story.



(Left) A duo of acrobats greeted guests during The Special Event's Opening Night Party. (Above) One of the interpretive performers during the Closing Night Celebration.

How to Stay Accountable After an Industry Conference



By Michelle Loretta

After a quiet year, we are eager to welcome the return of live industry conferences. No more dressing up for Zoom webinars or pre-recorded speaker videos—we get the real deal! Pack your bags, grab your business cards, and get excited. Will you make the most of it?

We attend conferences because we seek professional growth, both in terms of education and networking. However, we tend to think of it as a chance to learn all the things while onsite. But, the real payoff happens when we get back to the office and unpack all of our new knowledge and connections in our “real world” setting.

Conferences aren’t cheap. In addition to registration fees, travel expenses, and accommodations, you must also consider the time spent away from your office, as it’s quite the investment of your time and money. To ensure your experience leads to big returns, you must implement and activate what you learn onsite.

Holding yourself accountable is easier said than done, particularly if you’re returning to an inbox bursting at the seams and a long list of catch-up to-dos. Creating a system to guarantee follow-through and validation ensures that your investment in conference education and networking pays off long after you return to your desk!

Here’s your first tip: your post-conference accountability strategy starts long before you show up for Day 1 of the event. Making the most of your conference experience is all about creating a path for activation. Here’s how to set yourself up for success with

an action plan that gets you from pre- to post-conference.

IDENTIFY YOUR GREATEST BUSINESS NEEDS

Before heading to the conference, set aside some time to consider what you hope to gain from the experience. For example:

- What would help your business the most?
- Where can you use the most help?
- How will your attendance support your professional growth?
- Who are the movers and shakers that you know will change the game if you meet them?
- Is there specific knowledge you’re seeking?

Now, turn those answers into attainable goals for your time onsite. They will guide you through the conference to ensure that you are making the most of your time away from the office.

REVIEW YOUR GOALS WHILE ONSITE

Throughout the conference, make sure your goals remain top-of-mind. I recommend taking a moment at the start of each day to review them. Let your goals guide you in your decisions; from the sessions you choose to sit in on, to the networking events you choose to attend. Then, head over to the conference and make it happen.

As you go about your day, be intentional about tying your takeaways into your goals. Don’t just take notes; link them to action lists and highlight

“We attend conferences because we seek professional growth, both in terms of education and networking. **But, the real payoff happens when we get back to the office and unpack all of our new knowledge and connections in our ‘real world’ setting.**”

your goals in the margins. Don't just head to the tradeshow to pick up samples and business cards; stop by the tables to meet with people and start a conversation! Attending a conference is no time for passive engagement—you must be direct and goal-oriented to maximize your experience.

DETERMINE YOUR MOTIVATION TRIGGERS

Everybody finds motivation in their own way; you need to determine how you will stay on track to reach your goals. Are you a self-motivated person? If so, it may be as simple as adding dates to your calendar to take action on strategy ideation and reconnect with conference contacts.

On the other hand, if you rely on others for external motivation, consider reaching out to colleagues that attended the conference and set up a time to meet (in-person or virtually) several weeks later to work on the lessons learned together. This will help hold one another accountable. If you have a business coach, share your biggest takeaways with them and discuss how you can activate the lessons you've learned that will grow your business.

FIND AN ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

In the events and hospitality industry, we are in the business of taking care of our clients. Unfortunately, we often prioritize their immediate needs and desires over the needs of our business. Having a reliable accountability partner, whether it's a business coach or an industry buddy, can be a powerful way to stay on track.

Not only does an accountability partner serve as a cheerleader for our big goals, but they also act as a "check-in" to help you maintain focus. Having someone occasionally check in and say, "How's it going with that project you're working on?" can be incredibly motivating. It's far easier to tell ourselves we'll "get to it later" than to say it to someone else!

SET PRIORITIES WHEN YOU GET HOME

After the conference, you're going to get home to a million things calling for your attention. There are the action-packed notes you took at the conference and mulled over on the flight home. There are the people that you want to connect with on social media. And, of course, there is the list of tasks that you need to catch-up on from your absence.

Don't let your conference experience fade away in favor of what's on fire. Identify no more than three action items you want to focus on. Enlist your accountability team—whether it's a colleague at home, a business coach, or a new connection you met onsite—and share what you want to

activate on the tail of the conference.

With the industry booming with business right now, you might feel that you're too busy to focus on post-conference strategies when you get back. But, here's the thing: If you don't have time to follow up on your takeaways, you don't have time to go to a conference. It's as simple as that. Don't invest the time and money in a conference experience if you don't intend to do anything with it afterwards! ●

Michelle Loretta is a strategist for the events industry and creator of **Be Sage Consulting**, formerly Sage Wedding Pros. With a degree in accounting and a career rooted in her time at Deloitte, she dissects numbers to help level-up businesses' earnings and has educated, coached, and consulted event pros since 2009. In 2021, Michelle launched the **Sage Coaches program** to match industry experts with event professionals to supply coaching in niche topics.

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The Special Event

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The Special Event made its triumphant return in Miami

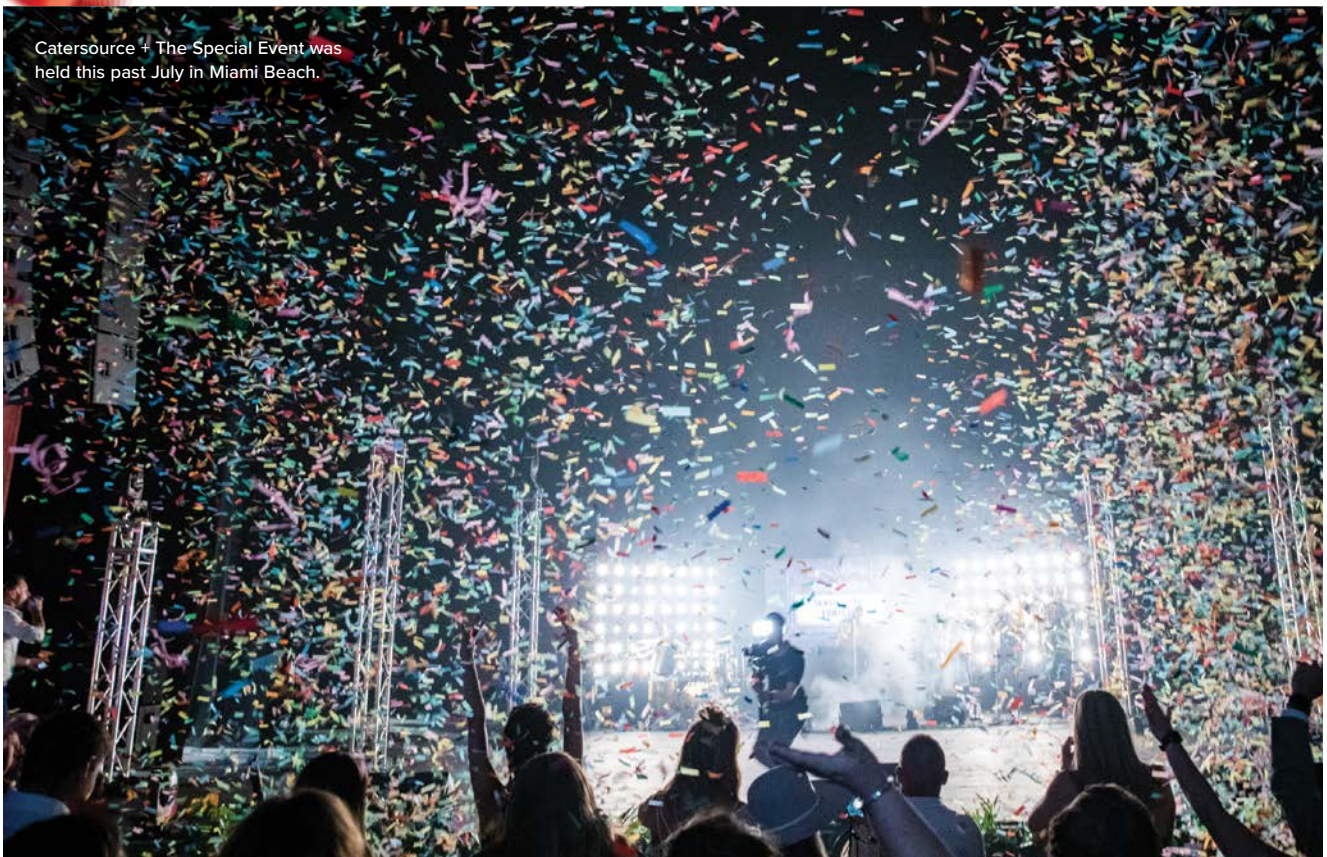
BY AMBER KISPERT

The Special Event made its return this past July in Miami, after essentially closing the city of Las Vegas in March 2020 as one of the last large-scale live events. Originally scheduled for March 2021, the event was pushed to July, holding hopes that an effective vaccination would allow us to gather once more. Success!

“There is a sun rising on the horizon for us because people are ready to celebrate,” said Michael Cerbelli. “This is the start of something new for all of us. Live events are here, and they’re here to stay.”

Over the next few pages, you will have the opportunity to relive the inspiration, memories, and Miami vibes that were over a year in the making. But first, we’d like to take this opportunity

Catersource + The Special Event was held this past July in Miami Beach.



A giant, glowing light bulb was a beacon to the bar during the Closing Night Party. Turn to Page 78 for more from the event.



Art Menchaca of the RK Group and **Michael Dwork** of Verterra at the Hard Rock Café, site of the Monday evening Connect Live event.



On the spot oyster shucking from **Oysters XO** kept mouths happy during The Event Experience. Turn to Page 74 for more from the event.

All photos courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos unless otherwise noted. Kathleen Stoehr also contributed to this article.

The Special Event Soars

to not only thank this year's attendees for bringing their enthusiasm, but also express our sincere appreciation to our speakers, sponsors, and exhibitors for providing the conference with top-notch offerings for 2021.

Back together & it feels so good

One of the overarching themes throughout the week during The Special Event (co-located with sister show, Catersource) was togetherness. Not only was the week about reconnecting with friends and colleagues, but it was also about the unified struggle and support that the industry encountered during the past year. We networked, we celebrated achievements, we learned in the classroom, and shopped on the tradeshow floor. It felt good to be with our colleagues, peers, and industry inspirations.



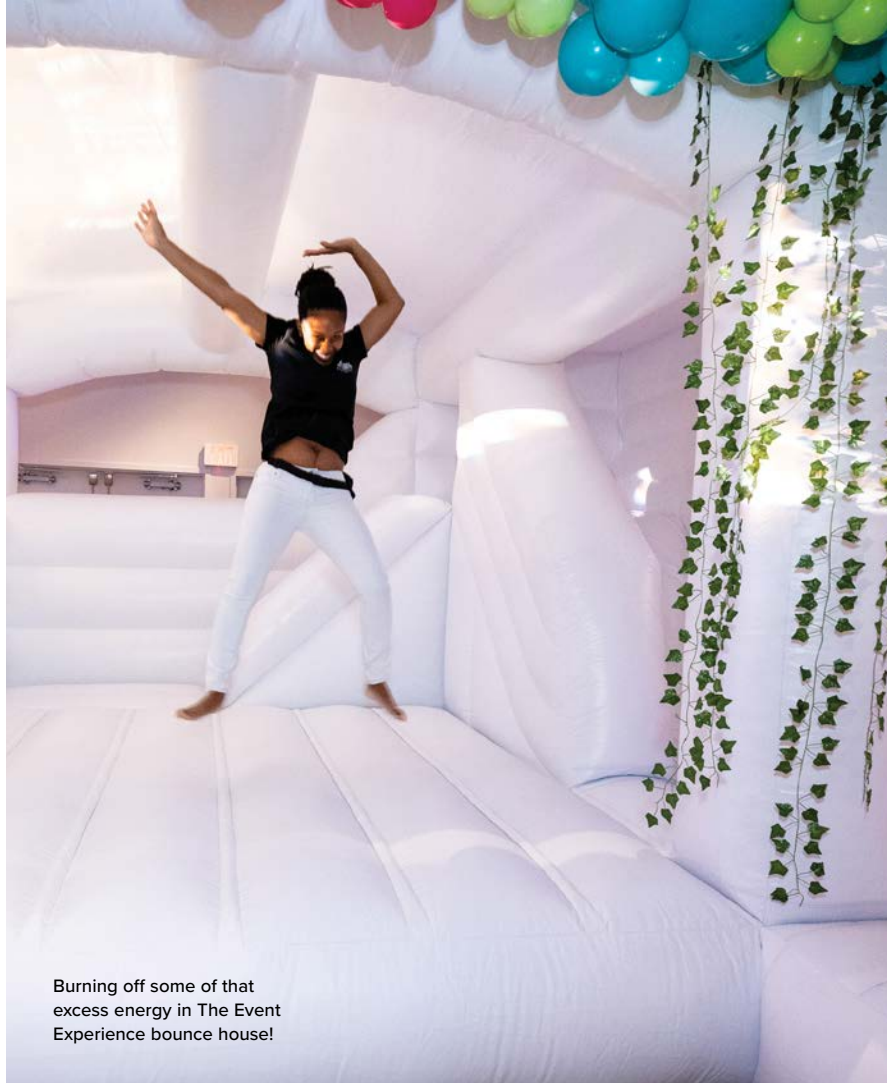
Maria Lanzas, Director of Catering Events, Sweetwater Branch Inn at Connect Live.



The Special Event + Catersource Show Ambassadors: **Heather Rouffe** (Atlas Event Rental) and **Bill Hansen** (Bill Hansen Catering).



Body painting (Psychedelic Dip) was a popular activity during Connect Live.



Burning off some of that excess energy in The Event Experience bounce house!

It's time to celebrate!

The feeling of togetherness was no more evident than during Catersource + The Special Event's evening Showcasing Events where every single one was filled with smiles, hugs, and celebratory cocktail toasts. Starting with Connect Live on Monday evening and ending the week with the Leadership Lunch and Closing Night Celebration on Thursday, there were many opportunities to enjoy the company of others in Miami Beach.

Get inspired

Three days of education sessions covering various event-forward tracks offered hours of learning opportunities. The popular Bridge stage allowed attendees of both conferences to come together and learn on topics such as diversity, leadership, and event trends. Plus, with most sessions audio and/or videotaped, attendees who purchased a full education pass can continue their learning back in the office through December 31.



Celebrity event planner **David Tintera** gave the closing keynote with his session *How to Be Bold in 2021*.

Registration will open on Nov. 12 for Catersource + The Special Event's co-located conference in Anaheim, CA, **May 2-5, 2022**. Go to www.thespecialeventshow.com for more information and www.specialevents.com for updates on speakers, sessions, and events.

catersource + **THE SPECIAL EVENT**

MAY 2-5, 2022 | ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER

“There is a sun rising on the horizon for us because people are ready to celebrate,” said Michael Cerbelli. **“This is the start of something new for all of us. Live events are here, and they’re here to stay.”**



Patrick Crosson (PC Events and Experiences), Yinka Freeman (Triple Pocket Events), and Noelle McInerney (Ladidadi XM) presented *Circle of Influence - Leveraging Relationships at all Levels*.



Claire Friday (Done by Friday) presented *Portfolios and Personalities: The Art of Being Multifaceted*.



Meghan Ely (OFD Consulting) presented three sessions this year: *2021 Global Wedding Trends*; *Here Come the Newbies: Preparing for the Event Pro Blitz*; and *New Revenue Streams for Your Wedding Business*.



Nelson Gonzalez (Evolution Eventos) delivered a hands-on floral workshop.



The Gastro Garage is an immersive, experiential pop-up dinner and catering service specializing in blow-torched gourmet donut sliders for parties and events.



Above: **US Foods** served delicious tastes on the tradeshow floor.

Left: **Cirque Entertainment's** LED lighted Champagne Tree is a piece of "living décor" that features an aerialist who pours champagne.

We're back in the event groove

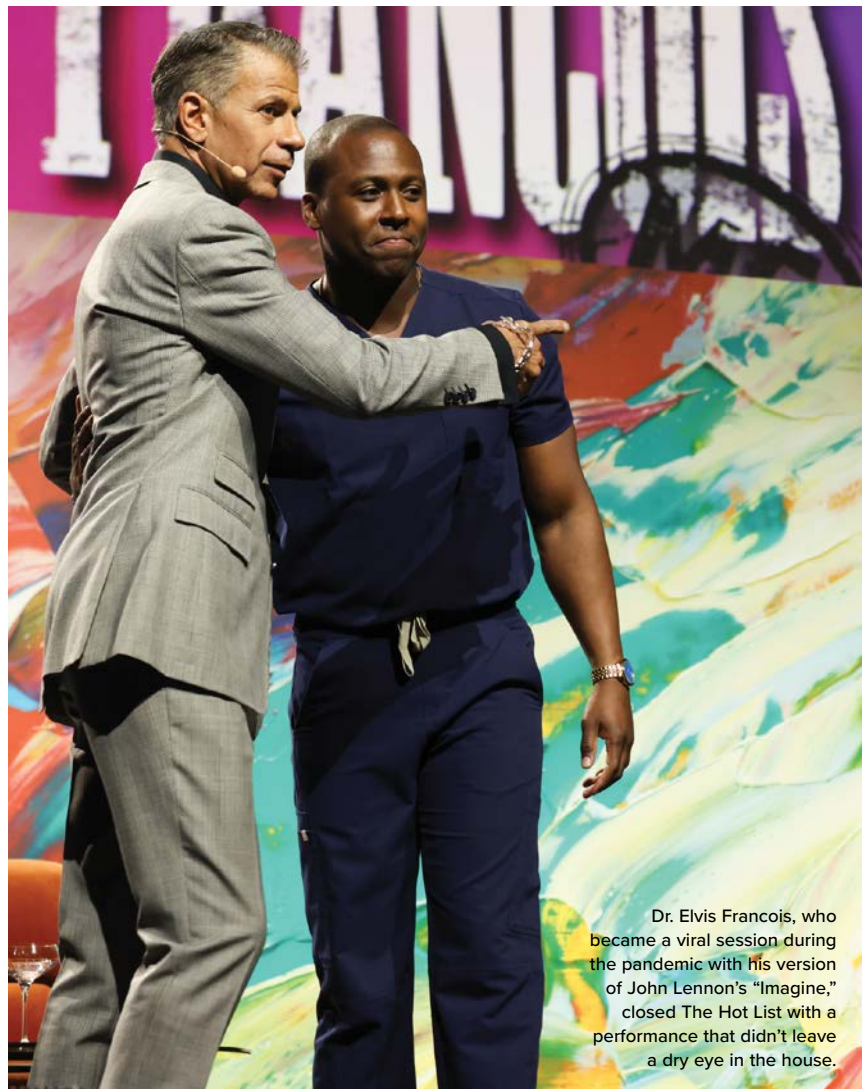
Inspiration could also be found on the combined Catersource + The Special Event tradeshow floor, where attendees could experience innovative products and services to help them transition their businesses into the next phase. Everything from décor to entertainment to technology solutions were on hand to prepare attendees for the onslaught as events return once again.

The Special Event Soars

A hot list

Every year Michael Cerbelli's: The Hot List™ highlights the best event trends through performances, demonstrations, and onstage displays. This year, however, Cerbelli focused on conversations with industry partners (Jordan Kahn, Rob Barber, David Lombardo, and others) discussing what they did differently over the past year, as well as the future of the industry.

Ever-popular comedian Harrison Greenbaum presented a virtual routine that left the audience in stitches, and despite the early morning, everyone in the audience wanted to try the spectacular cocktails presented with finesse by Justin Pasha of The Cup Bearer (see page 36 for more on that). Bret Culp opened and closed the show with a follow up to his 100 Million Moments video of 2020. Finally, a live performance from viral sensation Dr. Elvis Francois (the 'Singing Surgeon') stunned the audience with its beauty and reminded us all how much our frontline caregivers gave of themselves during the worst of the pandemic. A subdued Michael Cerbelli? Yes. A beautiful and transformative event? As always. ●



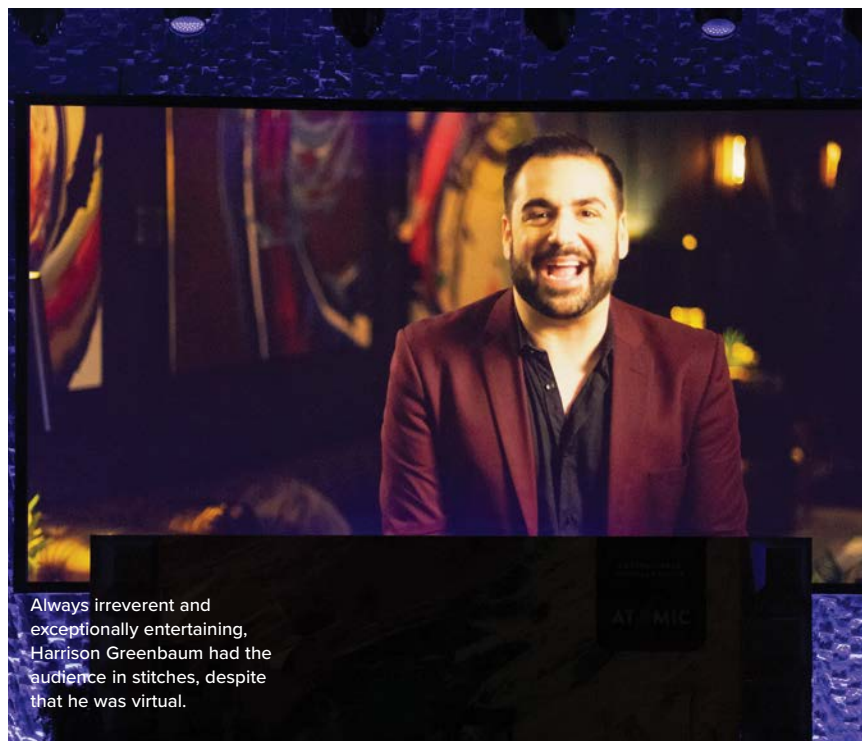
Dr. Elvis Francois, who became a viral sensation during the pandemic with his version of John Lennon's "Imagine," closed The Hot List with a performance that didn't leave a dry eye in the house.

Be a Part of The Special Event 2022

Call for Speakers is now open for both The Special Event and Catersource Conference & Tradeshow, which will be co-located in Anaheim, CA May 2–5, 2022. Go to www.thespecialeventshow.com for conference information, or tse2022.catersource-cfp.com to pitch a session topic.

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Always irreverent and exceptionally entertaining, Harrison Greenbaum had the audience in stitches, despite that he was virtual.

Justin Pasha
Bearer, a co-
company,
mixology o
during the



One of The Cup cocktail experience offered a live demonstration of the Hot List.



One of this year's Hot List featured products was Holo-Presence with THC Technologies, which can bring multiple presenters together from different locations onto one Virtual Global Stage.



The band Stratosphere warmed up the crowd with exceptional energy before Cerbelli came onstage.



This year marked the 20th anniversary of Michael Cerbelli's: The Hot List™, but next year will be, according to Cerbelli, the "biggest, baddest" 21st birthday party ever.

The Special Event Soars



The Closing Night Celebration is all about kicking back with friends new and old and celebrating a terrific week.



An elaborate LED fan awed guests during the Closing Night Celebration.



One of the Jungle Island residents, accompanied by its handler, visited during The Event experience.



The Event Experience was held at Jungle Island. The chairs for the event were Oniki Hardman (Oh Niki Occasions) and Christi Carey (Your Destination Connect)



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SPECIAL EVENTS



Three Surprising Marketing Transformations from COVID-19



We are in a position where the fundamentals of marketing are at play again. **You need to attract the right audience with the right messages at the right time, without any funny business that violates consumer privacy.**

By Christie Osborne

Can we all agree that 2020 was the worst? Instantly shutting our doors and managing a season's worth of canceled events was nothing short of horrifying.

As we juggled our new roles: therapists to clients, teachers to our children, and round-the-clock personal chefs to our families, we waded through poorly-built government websites, confusing forms, and rapidly changing requirements, desperately trying to secure PPP and EIDL loans that could save the businesses we worked so hard to build.

Like I said: the worst!

Now as the industry makes its first tentative steps toward real recovery, a simple retrospective is in order. Three key transformations will change how you market your business from here on out. I'll let you decide if they are for better or worse.

***Everyone* is online**

The pandemic forced even the most ardent luddites to get online. From remote work to online grocery shopping, folks of all ages shifted to a digital-forward life in 2020.

The end result: People of all ages are comfortable conducting business online. Therefore, your online presence is more important to your success than ever before. Optimize your website. Your website and social channels need to be more than brochures and a place to get info. They need to be places for people to do business with you.

• **Digitize + automate contracts and invoicing:** It's time to leave behind the paper trail in favor of digital receipts. With online contracts and

invoicing, you effectively save time for yourself and your clients. You'll get paid faster and spend less time chasing down late payments, while your clients enjoy the ease of signing and paying with the tap of a finger.

• **Keep using Zoom:** Shorten meeting times and cut travel and refreshment expenses by shifting client meetings and sales calls to Zoom. Bonus tip: Record video updates on Loomly to avoid unnecessary meetings altogether! Clients are used to video conferencing and messaging, so don't worry that remaining virtual will appear unprofessional. The game has truly changed, so use it to your advantage.

Consumers are more privacy conscious

Okay, maybe it's tech companies that are more privacy conscious and consumers are simply rejoicing. Nevertheless, new consumer privacy acts in the EU and California, as well as Apple's new iOS 14 update, set a modern standard for online consumer privacy.

What this means for you is the golden age of easy ad targeting is over. The newest change in the battle for consumer privacy is served with Apple's new iOS 14, which makes it harder than ever to track and retarget web traffic.

What does this mean for you? Briefly: May the best copywriter and content creator win! We are in a position where the fundamentals of marketing are at play again. You need to attract the right audience with the right messages at the right time, without any funny business that violates consumer privacy.

Things to consider:

• **Dig your well before you're thirsty.** Start your marketing and



advertising early. You cannot rely on algorithms and machine-learning to do your work for you. Instead, you'll need to start by finding qualified audiences and warming them up earlier through intentional posting, as well as top- and mid-funnel ads.

- **Get comfortable with instability.**

Ad costs wildly fluctuated during the pandemic and will continue to do so. Expect ad costs to continue to rise this year and accept that you'll need to remain flexible for some time.

- **Get on board with standard privacy requirements.** Privacy is top-of-mind. Consumers welcome it and when you demonstrate that their privacy is important to you, you will earn their trust. Show how you value privacy by complying with local and international privacy laws, highlighting your commitment to their security.

Stay nimble & prepare for the worst

The reality is that we are not yet out of the woods with the pandemic. Even if we are, I'm sure you can imagine all sorts of other disasters befalling the industry, whether it's a new variant or a natural disaster.

Too many event pros were regrettably reminded of the adage, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," as they combed through their internet-downloaded contracts searching for a miracle in the force majeure clause. The best prevention is to stay nimble and have a plan for the worst.

Things to consider:

- **Revisit your contract.** Make sure you are covered. Businesses, consumers, and the legal profession have all learned a powerful lesson about contracts and unforeseen disasters. The force majeure that protected you pre-COVID may not provide as much coverage now. Contact a lawyer and go over your contract with an eye on protecting you and your business in all sorts of situations.
- **Revisit communication policies.** Maybe you had an iron-clad contract that protected you legally, but it certainly doesn't protect you from being thrashed in the court of public opinion. Mitigate any damage to your reputation when you enforce a contractual clause by having a solid communication plan, both internally for handling client needs and

externally for responding to online criticism.

- **Revisit your workflows.** If you must postpone events and rework contracts, be sure to have backup plans in place before you need them. During the first wave of shutdowns in 2020, clients and event pros alike scrambled to figure out whether to cancel or postpone. Have all your contingency and backup plans in place before you need them.

COVID has changed the event industry in fundamental ways, but that doesn't mean you can't thrive in a post-pandemic world. In fact, the lessons we've learned from the pandemic could set us up to successfully survive any disaster that befalls us in the future. ●

Christie Osborne is the owner of **Mountainside Media**, a company that helps event industry professionals brands develop scalable marketing strategies that bring in more inquiries and leads. Christie is a national educator with recent speaking engagements at NACE Experience, Catersource + The Special Event, and the ABC Conference.

FLOWER POWER: HOW TO ELEVATE YOUR EVENTS

— *with* — *Florals*

Top tips from a floral and décor maven on how to use flowers strategically, and cost effectively, to transform a gathering into a very special event.


By Sue Pelletier

Photos courtesy Arden Photography

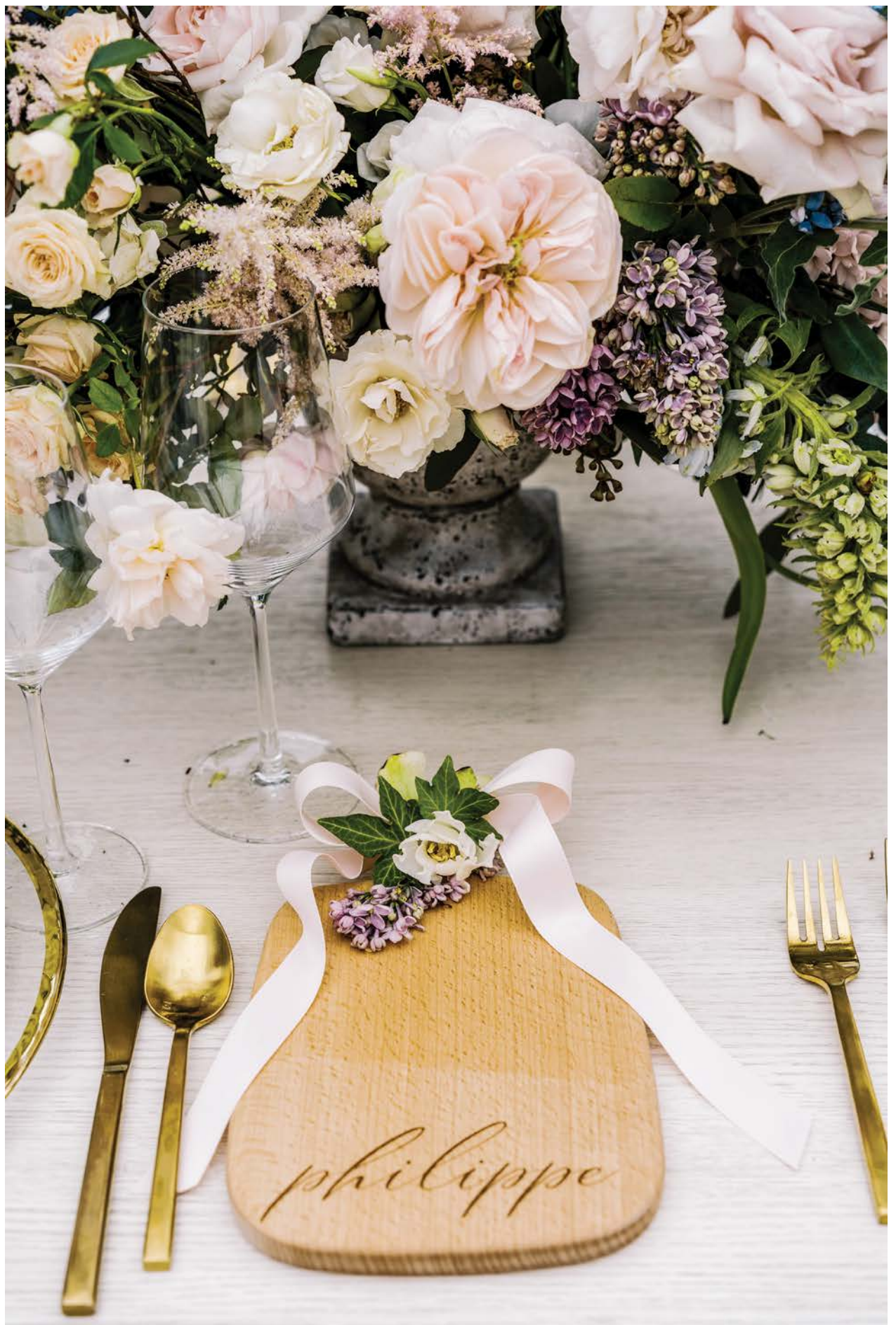
IN TODAY'S EVENT ENVIRONMENT, everyone is looking to scale back on the extras and provide more value for the buck. But whatever you do, don't skip the florals, said CeCe Todd of [CeCe Designs LLC](#), a floral and event designer based in Birmingham, Ala., during her session at Catersource + The Special Event this summer in Miami.

"Florals automatically elevate an event," she says. "Like it or not, they are considered a status symbol—they say you invested in the experience. They say to guests, 'You are important to me.' They promote productivity, and they induce joy and happiness."

They also give today's Insta-crazy guests a gorgeous backdrop for their selfie shares, she added. Part of the reason why florals bring so much to the party is



Note the dearth of baby's breath — one of CeCe Todd's top floral no-no's — on this flower girl's crown. The roses are fully opened, and there's nary a "funeral flower" in the wreath. It's worth the expense to go all-out on high-impact, highly visible displays like this one that will melt hearts and set a beautiful-yet-whimsical tone for the entire event.



that they tickle almost every one of the senses: smell, touch, and sight, but also taste (some flowers are edible, after all).

“Florals can create a feeling, a subconscious perception, that set the tone, atmosphere, and concept without you having to say a word,” Todd says. And she should know: Todd has spent 18 years using her “insane attention to detail” and over-the-top style catering to the needs of a client list that includes celebrity clients such as Journey, Train, Kevin Hart and Ariana Grande.

Special Events magazine recently caught up with Todd to find out more about how to power up events using flowers without busting your budget, along with some tips on today’s hottest floral and décor trends.

SPECIAL EVENTS: *How do you determine the appropriate floral styles, colors and amounts for an event?*

TODD: One great rule of thumb is, if you’ve seen it in a casket cover or a funeral spray, don’t use it at a special event! There are some flowers that, while they deserve to be in funeral arrangements, will not evoke joy at a wedding or special event—they will have the opposite effect.

While I tend to work in the high-end luxury market, this goes for any event: Abundance is key, but not always the best key. For example, you can have an abundance of baby’s breath and gerber daisies and it will not send the message you want—they are too mundane. And, while everyone seems to want baby’s breath for some reason, it actually is not as cheap as you think. It’s horrible to work with, like wrangling kittens, and it requires 42 stems of baby’s breath to cover the same area you could with a single hydrangea. It is more expensive when you do the math.

On the other side of the spectrum is lily of the valley, one of the most expensive flowers—it’s what queens use in their bouquets. You wouldn’t want to use an abundance, but if you place a vase of lilies of the valley in a prominent location, it says, “I invested a lot in this event.”

The most important thing is to make the size of your arrangements proportionate to your event’s scale and purpose. For a wedding, if you have a huge head table with a bunch of tiny arrangements, it will look underwhelming. If you build an over-abundant canopy of flowers over the head table, it will look a bit ostentatious. You want to stay in the comfortable happy medium.

In terms of types of flowers, you can’t go wrong with roses—just don’t use “grocery store” roses. They should be fully flowering and beautiful, not all puckered up. Think about using flowers that you see growing in people’s yards, like gladiolas and snapdragons and hydrangeas. However, as much as I love sunflowers and they do invoke joy, they probably won’t be appropriate for a wedding unless it’s being held in a barn.

SE: *What are other common event floral design mistakes to avoid?*

TODD: The number one mistake I see people make is being



(Above) **CeCe Todd** shared her top floral tips during Catersource + The Special Event in Miami. Photo courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos

(Left) Trending now: Personalization. Case in point: individualized small charcuterie boards at every place setting, complete with each person’s name in hand-lettering, tied with a ribbon and some florals. That says, “I value you so much that I went to the trouble and expense to have your name hand-lettered,” says Todd.

unbalanced in their budgeting. Some will want to spend a million dollars on a photographer and budget \$300 for florals, while others will budget \$75k on florals and have their brother’s sister’s college roommate do the photography. People tend to go to one extreme or the other, when what they really need is a balance of really good flowers and a really good photographer.

Another mistake I see a lot is wanting to go with just putting a candle on each of the tables. If you’re going to have the tables, you need to put something nice on them that says you care. You don’t have to go over-the-top crazy, but even a couple of bud vases will set a better tone than a candle. If you don’t have the budget to do it right, think about scaling the size of the event to your budget—if you invited 150 instead of 350, you could curate a better experience. Again, keep everything proportional.

And the trend of using mason jars, wooden slabs, burlap, and baby’s breath needs to be buried in a shallow unmarked grave! It is time to put that one away for good. Instead, fill your grandmother’s crystal vase with hydrangeas. There are ways to be thrifty and still have something beautiful.

SE: *How can event planners on a budget still have fabulous florals—any cost-saving tips to share?*

TODD: Spend your money where the florals will have the most impact. For a wedding, you’re only at the ceremony for a short time, so don’t invest too much on décor there. Have beautiful bouquets for the bride and bridesmaids, but you can skip the aisle florals. For the reception, create one big focal point, usually at the head table. You can go with candles on the rest of the tables—all they will remember is the epic-ness of your over-the-top head table. But not just a single candle,



I'm not going back on what I said about those. But a cluster of mixed pillar candles with some greenery and small flowers; and maybe place the bridesmaid's bouquets next to the candles.

But don't use the bridesmaid bouquets as the sole centerpiece—that's another mistake I see a lot. Remember that guests will get to the reception before the wedding party, so they'll walk in and see half the tables are bare. First impressions count!

Also think about where you can repurpose. For example, you can repurpose aisle flowers to be centerpieces after the ceremony. You can reuse the altar flowers to showcase the cake at the reception. Even if you have a big budget, there's no reason to just burn through it when you can get double use out of some things.

Also repurpose what's already in your venue! For a wedding in December, pick white, red, and green for your colors, and use the decorations that are already in your wedding and reception venues. It's free décor! The same can be true for other

(Above) "Florals can create a feeling, a subconscious perception that sets the tone and atmosphere and concept without you having to say a word," says Todd. Even small touches, such as the way the butterfly motif and floral choice is carried through on the place cards and settings, will reinforce the atmosphere.

times of the year—use what's seasonal and already in place.

If the wedding is in February though, do not pick red and pink to be your primary colors! Everything gets marked up for Valentine's Day, and roses that are usually \$75 a dozen will be \$150. Don't get me wrong, I love a good Valentine's Day wedding, but if you want red and pink and roses, be prepared to pay twice as much.

My best advice is to hire a good floral designer who knows how to stretch a budget. I know how to accomplish a bride's vision without them having to sell a kidney.

SE: *With the holidays on the horizon, what are some of the floral trends event planners should know about?*

TODD: I would be remiss if I didn't tell people to be prepared for shortages this holiday season, not just in florals but also in everything from forks and plates and linen to shrimp. COVID-19 affected the supply chain for everything, and a lot of suppliers have had huge losses and have had to raise their prices. It can take months to get something here from India or China, and even if you do get it, it could be 20, 30, even 50% more expensive. Most flowers come from South America, which in addition to farms closing due to COVID, there have been floods and crop die-offs, which means they're no longer in the right rotation, and they have staffing shortages. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but be prepared for shortages, and for higher prices. If you're not ordering now, especially for anything that needs to be shipped internationally, you may not be able to get that order in for holiday parties.

One positive that has come out of this is that we're all working together more, trading and bartering among the different vendors. Be that blessing to somebody right now. If you have it, share it, because you're probably going to need something someone else has too.

That said, this year we can expect the trend toward individualized and personalized everything will continue—floral and décor will follow along with the trend toward individual servings instead of buffets—and I don't think holiday events will be any different. So giant shared charcuterie boards will probably be out. For an event I did this summer, we placed small charcuterie boards at every place setting, complete with each person's name in hand-lettering, tied with a ribbon and some florals. That says, "I value you so much that I went to the trouble and expense to have your name hand-lettered."

It's more about the experience—for holiday parties, I can see tiny fir trees at every place setting with their name and a Christmas ball tied on with a ribbon. Think individualized, personalized, and experiential. Everyone has been locked up and they want to have fun with others. So yes, make sure you have good flowers, but also make sure you have great experiences and interactive moments. If you do corporate events, put more money into the experience and give them a night out they'll remember. ●



CONFERENCE NEWS

by Kathleen Stoehr



Conference update

The Special Event heads to Anaheim in 2022

It has been a few years since The Special Event was held in California (San Diego, January 2019) but indeed we are *goin' back to Cali* and the beautiful, welcoming city of Anaheim for The Special Event 2022!

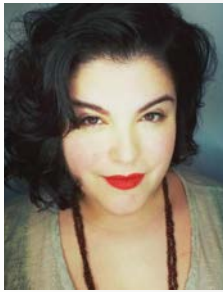
A few wonderful things to report as we build our show.

CALL FOR SESSION SPEAKERS: First, the Call for Session Speakers is open until September 30, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Given we have three months less to plan this event than our normal schedule, we will be adhering to that deadline and beginning the vetting process in October. If you would like to

be part of the volunteer team that vets sessions for the show, contact kathleen.stoehr@informa.com.

Should you like to propose a session for our event, [click here](#) for The Special Event or for Catersource you can [click here](#). We encourage you to take the plunge and share your knowledge with your peers and colleagues! As David Tutura mentions in his column on page 84, his first speaking engagement at The Special Event many years ago, drew just 40 people into the room, but those “baby steps” taken were what he needed to get where he is today. If you have never spoken before but feel you have something important to say, take that first step!

ANNOUNCING OUR 2022 KEYNOTE: Next, we are delighted to announce that Ms. Christina Matteucci, Executive Director for David Beahm Experiences, will



CHRISTINA MATTEUCCI

keynote our Opening General Session. Ms. Matteucci received a standing ovation for her keynote at our Leadership Lunch in 2021 (at the W South Beach), attended primarily by owners and upper-level executives of some of the most important companies in the hospitality industry. Her message of teambuilding and

support resonated incredibly well for our times, her anecdotes so wrapped into the fabric of what it means to be in hospitality...we knew she would be an apt choice to speak to the entire assembly. Mark the date for our Opening General Session: May 4, 2022 at the Anaheim Convention Center.

OPEN OF REGISTRATION: Registration, along with our popular "Confidence" rate (that is, you are so confident you will benefit that you are buying the pass without seeing the full conference and tradeshow line up), will soft launch on November 12. Keep up with details at thespecialeventshow.com.

ALL OF THE EXTRAS

In 2022, we will be bringing back the popular Venue Tour. We will also add a Catering Tour! Enjoy an afternoon of

behind the scenes visits on Monday, May 2 and receive actionable ideas to bring back to your own business.

Our very popular Showcasing Events will return once again on all four nights of the conference, as well as the return of the Gala Awards, presented on Thursday evening, May 5. Applications for the Gala Awards are now open through (Early Bird) 12/31/2021 and (Late Bird) 1/15/2022. Submit an entry in the ACE/Gala Awards platform [here](#).

As for the event venues, the Catersource + The Special Event team will be in Anaheim toward the end of October to



Who knows—you might bring home two Gala statues! You only will...if you submit an entry!!
Photo courtesy WASIO Photography



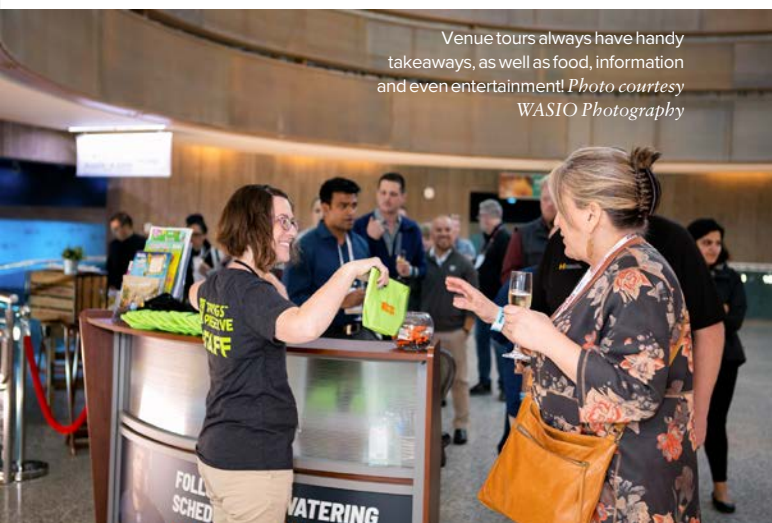
Debra Elias discussed trends and technology at The Special Event 2021. Now's your chance to apply to speak! *Photo courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos*

visit spaces and talk to venue owners. If you are interested in having your venue considered for one of our flagship evening events, contact jesse.parziale@informa.com.

LEADERSHIP LUNCH

Referencing the Leadership Lunch, our pool of candidates is being considered for the Special Event Lifetime Achievement Award and the Richard Carbotti Award celebrating volunteerism. We are delighted to note that we will once again offer this incredible luncheon and ceremony in 2022, on May 5. Location TBD.

Join us in Anaheim this May 2–5 to celebrate another year of bringing industry leaders together! ●



Venue tours always have handy takeaways, as well as food, information and even entertainment! *Photo courtesy WASIO Photography*



Above: **Larry Green** received the Carbotti Award in 2020; in 2021, Robin Selden was awarded that honor. *Photo courtesy WASIO Photography*

Below: The Catersource + The Special Event Opening Night Party was held at The Fillmore—incredible acoustics and an exceptional space. *Photo courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos*



Showtime *Cocktails*

Sippers &
spectacle
combine
to elevate
events

BY KATHLEEN
STOEHR

It was tempting to begin this article with a twee little quote from *Cocktail*... the horrific 1988 movie in which Tom Cruise juggles bottles and babes backed by a thumping soundtrack. But I...just...can't do it. The movie may have opened the public's eyes to the world of flair bartending in the mid-1980s to late '90s, but the recent trend toward spectacle within the cocktail industry is so much more than that.





Andre Ichim, shown here at Catersource + The Special Event in July 2021, drew cheers from the audience via his showman style. Later in the routine, he climbed atop the bar and poured cocktails simultaneously. *Photos courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos*



Such *Flair!*

After flair frittered away in the previous century, we had a serious decade or two: craft cocktails replaced Cosmos, and speakeasys triumphed over TGI Fridays. Beautiful things emerged: the spark of a match leading to the scent of burnt citrus peel. Slow melting, clear as clear ice cubes. Rows of dasher bottles housing specialty bitters. A stir with a proper swizzle versus a plastic straw.

As we emerge from the pandemic, however, the experience of spectacle, entertainment, the razzle-dazzle excitement of life, talent, and fun is on the rise. This trend is not necessarily “for volume,” notes USBG bartender Nigal Vann of The Berkshire Room in Chicago, “unless you have a dedicated person only making that drink”—but when you can do it: it is a surefire event activation.

Let’s take a look at where entertainment is no longer just on a stage or strolling through a crowd, but also finding its way behind the bar to the delight of captivated guests.

What is flair? Essentially, it is an offshoot of the thousands-of-years-old craft of juggling. Investigate it by pointing your eyes at TikTok, the pandemic darling with a billion monthly active users as of Q1 2021.

Witness annelise_bartender7 of Flair University (288.8k followers) spinning bitters, bottles, and Bostons; valentinluca, a three-time World Flair Champion (212.9k followers) exhibiting a simple three club juggling pattern, but with 750s; yochew13_ (358.1k followers) flipping, shaking, and straining beautiful imbibes; and mdfkandi of The Cup Bearer, most recently seen wowing the audience at Catersource + The Special Event as part of Michael Cerbelli’s: The Hot List™ 2021, tossing bottles and taking (rapt) prisoners.

“When done well,” said Adam Rains via Tales of the Cocktail, “flair creates a visceral, dynamic, and exciting experience. A good ‘flair-tender’ is able to work the room like a DJ, raising the volume and tempo to bring the crowd to a frenzy.”

Will flair bartending—essentially tossing citrus instead of clubs and bottles instead of balls—captivate your audiences once more? “When it comes to flair bartending it really is the ultimate for bar experiences, especially at events where entertainment is everything,” says Justin Pasha of The Cup Bearer.

Pasha is so certain the future of flair is at hand he is working toward putting together a full line-up of “flairtenders” by spring 2022. “We’ll [be able to] provide the first ever choreographed flair shows for events here in the U.S.”

Chicago bartender Marco Montaguano, a noted flair professional, is also buying into the future of flair. Known for incorporating small blowtorches and flaming alcohol into his presentations, Montaguano says “I am starting my [own] craft flair program!”

First step for any mixologist who wants to add a little flair to their behind the bar routine? Practice with soft juggling balls before you pick up the breakables.

Smoke, fire & Sizzle

I first stumbled across a beauty of a cocktail by Justin Pasha of The Cup Bearer while attending the annual “Love Shack” party, presented by Marcia Selden Catering & Events and Ron Ben-Israel Cakes (February 2020). Seen again at Catersource + The Special Event 2021 during Michael Cerbelli’s: The Hot List™, Pasha served the rum-based Candela on stage, a delicious tippie with a smoky cinnamon topper that pops upon first sip. Pasha prefers the Flavour Blaster gun for the bubble execution, available worldwide and retailing for a tad over \$400.

Of course, any beverage in a coupe will accommodate a smoky bubble: give non-alc drinkers in the crowd the most eye-catching of beverages to encourage low or no ABV drinking, for example.

Beyond the smoking gun, smoking boxes are still popular with bartenders and the clients who love the taste and drama of smoke.

“I put a new cocktail on the menu this summer [at Black Bear Distillery]—the Smoked Cherry Old Fashioned,” says bar manager Shannon Jackson. “I expanded that to Smoked Peach Old Fashioned and then added a Smoked Irish Cherry Manhattan.

“But,” Jackson continues, “it takes four to five minutes to make just one.”

“We use palo santo chips to smoke our top-shelf margarita-style drink as a featured cocktail at our bar in Fredricksburg, Texas,” says Tara Guthrie, co-owner and sommelier at Chase’s Place Cocktails + Kitchen.

A quick method to bring on the smoke with less effort is to pop a small chunk of dry ice into a cocktail, but always employ a small strainer or tweezer to remove the ice upon delivery to



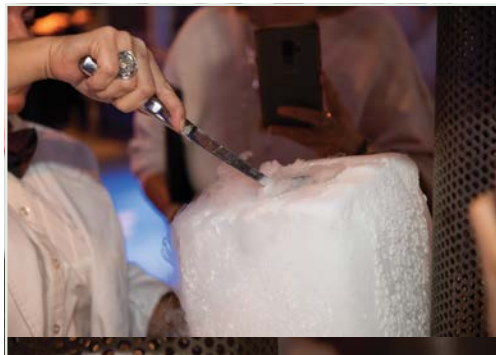
Justin Pasha places a vapor bubble atop a cocktail at the 2020 Love Shack party in New York City. Photo courtesy Clane Gessel Photography; Recipe courtesy The Cup Bearer

Recipe: Candela

2 oz. Plantation Pineapple R
.25 oz. Demerara sugar syr
3 dashes chocolate bitters
Orange peel
Cinnamon vapor bubble

DIRECTIONS

Combine all liquid ingredi
inside a mixing glass, add ic
stir well. Strain into coupe g
garnish with orange peel an
cinnamon vapor using a Flav
Blaster gun.



Above and left: Bacardi was pou
a block of dry ice to instantly c
then scooped as a slushie into a
vessels. Photo courtesy Jack Par
Leading Caterers of a



a guest. Or, make the dry ice block the stirring vessel, as shown in the accompanying photos (*left*) from a Proof of the Pudding event in late 2019. Boozy frozés are very instyle, and the spectacle of a quick freeze never tires guests. As always, ingesting dry ice is hazardous (use the utmost care with your guests)...but the performance—delightful!

Matches and flames are another popular means to entertain guests and enhance the senses. Flaming citrus peels are easy enough but bring on the culinary torches if you really want to draw a crowd!

Cocktails can be served with small sparklers, the sound of sizzle can be brought about with the addition of pop rocks, and flaming a spritz of alcohol such as vodka or other higher ABV spirits will produce a quick burst of flame.

Top right: The dab of dry ice was just enough to create a smoky & photographic dream in the “Petit Caquiri” from Petit Camion of Greece. Instruct guests to let the cocktail sit (take all the photos you want) until the ice is completely dissolved. Photo courtesy Lefteris Kalampokas

Right: Rosemary smoke & alcohol flame: Note how Rotterdam mixologist Chi-ho Ta keeps a very small spritzer bottle of Mandarine Napoleon (a citrus liqueur) to intensify the flame applied to the rosemary sprig. Photo courtesy Kathleen Stoehr





As eye-catching *Décor*

Above left: Pouring a champagne tower is not without risk. It takes practice and a strong foundation for it to work properly.
Photo: Alamy

Above right: The absinthe fountain contains chilled water that drips slowly over a sugar cube and into a glass containing absinthe. But—many bartenders have found other uses for the fountain such as dispensing small amount of liqueurs or drips of shrubs or bitters.
Photo: Alamy

The champagne tower, long may it reign, is the epitome of excess and spectacle. “We’ve been building champagne towers for the past five years,” says Pasha. “In our experience, nothing creates a sense of occasion quite like a large cascading champagne tower.”

There are several factors that go into proper execution of a champagne tower, Pasha notes. “Over the years we have had the opportunity to perfect all those elements such as structural integrity, strategic placement, and perhaps most importantly—timing. We have no doubt built more champagne towers over the years than anyone else in the industry which is why so many turn to us when they need what is inherently dangerous and risky, unless done right.”

The risk is real; see the sidebar on pages 42 and 43 to learn how to build your own, but when in doubt, calling in the experts is always the right decision.

Other ideas include unique pouring vessels and absinthe fountains, towering ice luges, and pedal-powered apparati, to name a few. All draw the eye and offer a sense of spectacle at any gathering.

No flair?

Go for garnishes, display & technique

“Simple things like using cotton candy in a glass before pouring the cocktail, cutting garnishes in a unique way, and lighting citrus oils on fire still wow the guest,” says Vann.

“We’re doing a lot of work using CBD flower infusions with hempseed vodka,” offered Guthrie—a smart move considering the popularity of all things hemp and cannabis. Her cocktail garnish (right), a very recognizable five leafed plant, is an eye-catching winner.

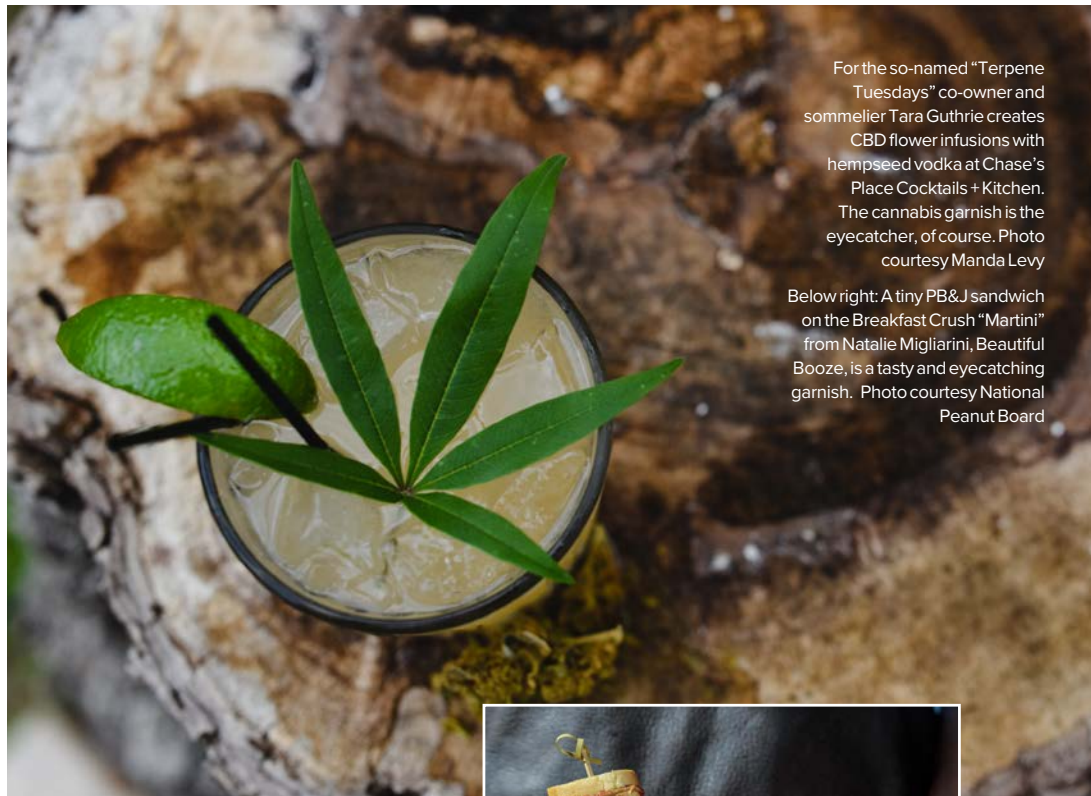
“I’ve worked in a few places where the aesthetics are among the top priority when creating cocktails,” says Vann.

“This would include flavored ice, flowers and fruit in ice molds, custom glasses, cocktails inside of the ice or even interactive cocktails, where the client has to do something to drink it.”

“My experience [leans mostly on] craft stations at events [with] a plethora of fruit and herbs,” says bar and cocktail consultant and USBG Board member David Nepove, “allowing the bartender to customize a drink for the guests waiting in a long line, hoping to be wowed.”

This brings up the most salient point surrounding spectacle at the bar, “Multiple stations and options are a must when looking to entertain with visual cocktails,” notes Nepove.

My own opinion? You will always have me at technique. That beautiful stir emanating from the wrist instead of the forearm, that double strain, the



For the so-named “Terpene Tuesdays” co-owner and sommelier Tara Guthrie creates CBD flower infusions with hempseed vodka at Chase’s Place Cocktails + Kitchen. The cannabis garnish is the eyecatcher, of course. Photo courtesy Manda Levy

Below right: A tiny PB&J sandwich on the Breakfast Crush “Martini” from Natalie Miglarini, Beautiful Booze, is a tasty and eyecatching garnish. Photo courtesy National Peanut Board

extension of a pinky as the garnish is placed, the graceful arc of a Boston-to-Boston throw, the civilized gesture of one arm behind the back as the other pours liquid into a coupe without a drop spilled—that’s my happy place spectacle.

But at the very least, offers Rains, flair is “a vital component of our drinking history and there are signs that it’s coming back. In what form? Only time will tell.” ●





Justin Pasha pours a 9x9 champagne tower at Michael Cerbelli's: The Hot List™. Note that he is elevated, putting himself above the top glass versus below. Photo courtesy WTA
Photo via SpotMyPhotos

Y
Cha



Build Your Own Champagne Tower



Above: The rims of the champagne glasses should touch, so that they form a sort-of "diamond" pattern. Photo: INGimage

Structural integrity and perfect placement are key to a successful champagne tower, says Justin Pasha of The Cup Bearer. But, if you want to attempt building them on your own, below are the steps you will need to take. My suggestion? Start small. Just as beginning jugglers begin with one ball, tossing it back and forth from hand to hand, and then add a second, and then a third, building your confidence little by little will go a long way in the success of this project on a larger scale.

First, refer to the below chart: it will tell you how many coupe glasses you will need to construct the tower. Note that the glassware must be identical for the tower to be successful.

Make sure your base is exceptionally sturdy. The tower requires good structure and stability. ●

FOR A 4X4 TOWER

Determine your final height and width before you start building. For the chart, I used the Libbey 1924 coupe (#501308), with a liquid capacity of 4.75 oz. Maximum bowl diameter is 3.74 inches and height is 5.99 inches. I rounded up to 3.75" and 6" to make the math a touch easier. Your own glass selection may have a different measurement, be sure to update the chart accordingly.

- While the champagne tower may look like it's built in a circle, you are actually building it square.
- You will need a table at least 24 inches in diameter to accommodate the 15

inches total width for a 4-glass x 4-glass square.

- Begin building, making sure each glass is touching all the other glasses around it snugly so that a sort-of diamond pattern emerges in the open areas between the glasses (see inset photo).
- Move onto the next layer, placing the center of each stem directly in the center of open diamonds created by the level below. There should be nine total diamonds on that first level. Make sure these glasses on the next level are also kissing rims.
- The top of the second layer will have four diamonds, the top of the third, just 1. Finish with the final glass for a total of four rows.
- Note that if the table is a regular height of about 29", the top glass will reach a height of 53" (or 4'5"). This may seem short enough for you to pour the top glass while standing on the ground; but leaning over the tower can prove catastrophic. Bring a step ladder or short platform to stand on so you are comfortably above the tower versus next to it. Finally, ensure you have a towel or spillage tray handy, just in case.

A 750-milliliter bottle of champagne should fill about five glasses, so for a 30-glass tower, you will need 6 to 7 bottles, allowing for possible spillage or foaming. Pour carefully into the top glass, allowing it to overflow into the lower glasses, with those spilling into yet another layer and to the final layer. You will probably need to top some off or fill internal layers. Enjoy!

SERVES 30 GUESTS

Starting size	Width of bottom layer	Suggested minimum table size	Height on 29" table	Serves
3x3	11.25"	24"	+ 18" = 47"	14
4x4	15"	24"	+ 24" = 53"	30
5x5	18.75"	36"	+ 30" = 59"	55
6x6	22.5"	36"	+ 36" = 65"	91
7x7	26.25"	48"	+ 42" = 71"	140
8x8	30"	48"	+ 48" = 77"	204
9x9	33.75"	60"	+ 54" = 83"	285



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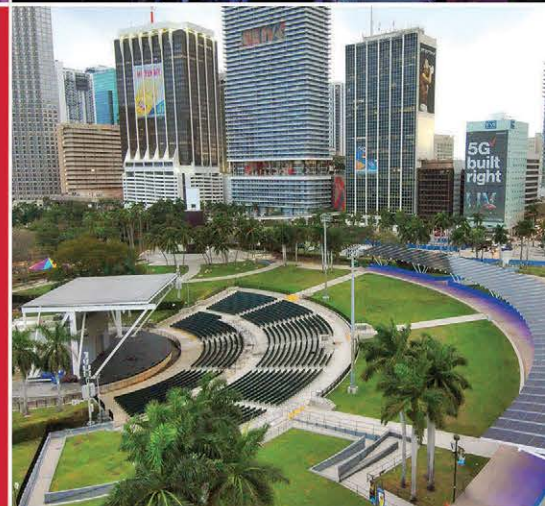
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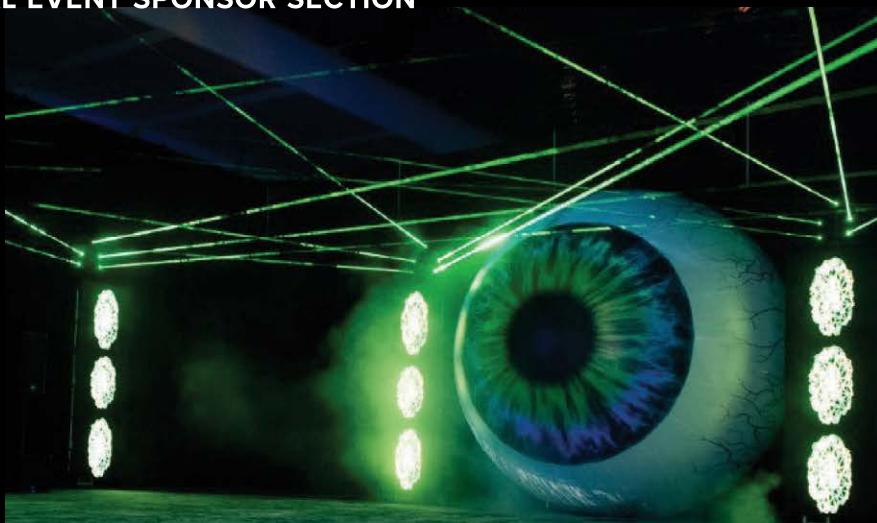
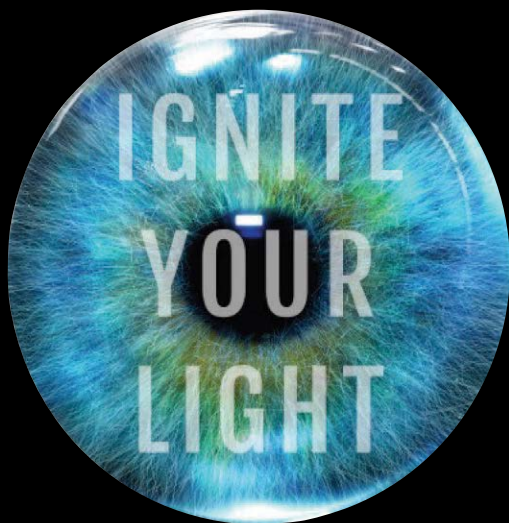
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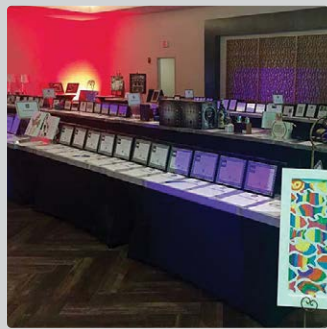
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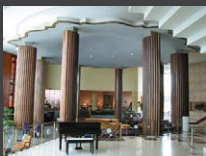
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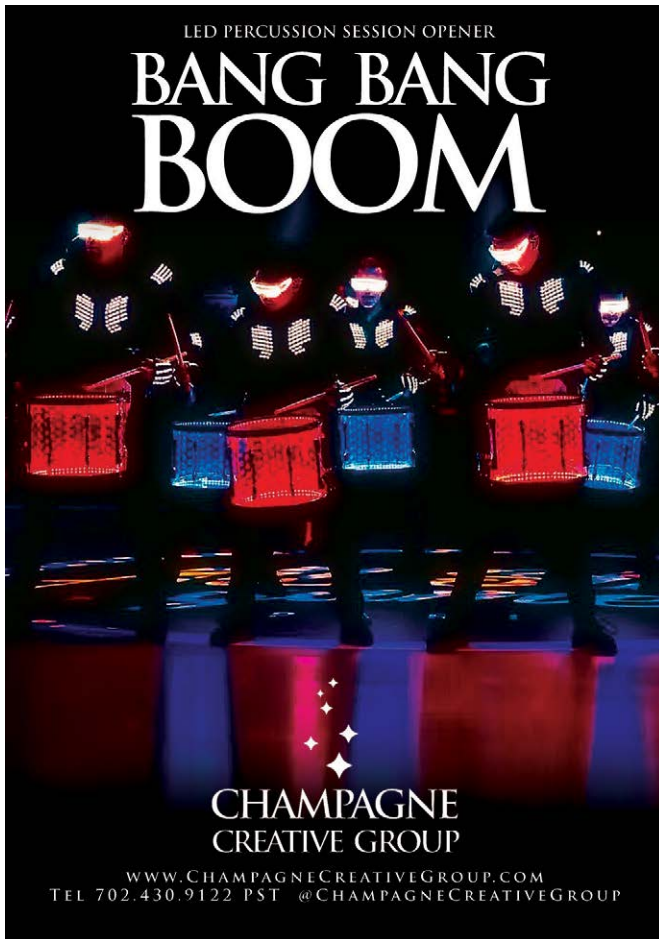
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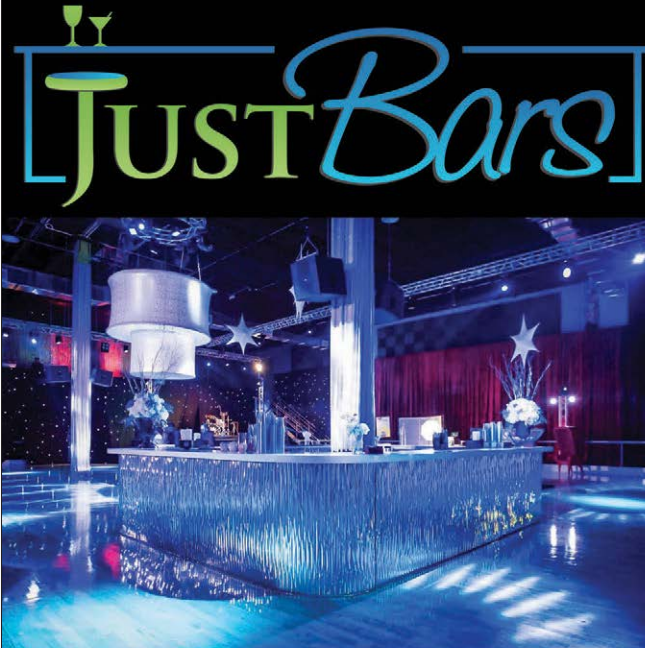
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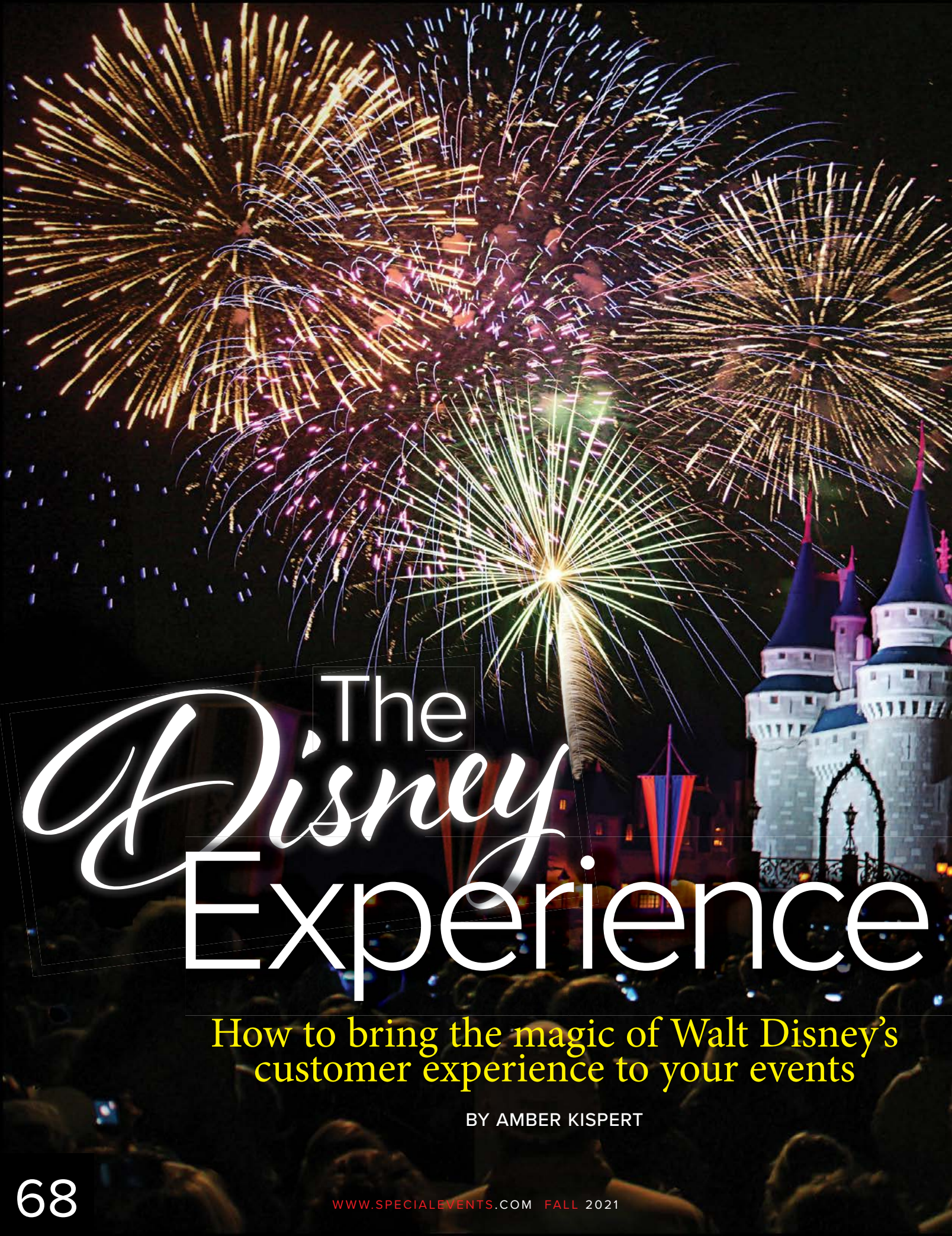


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The *Disney* Experience

How to bring the magic of Walt Disney's
customer experience to your events

BY AMBER KISPERT



The idea of Disney®-themed events is nothing new. Princess birthday parties, *Under the Sea* beach-themed weddings—we have seen them all. More than whimsical décor and enchanting music, however, the Disney aesthetic—that is, the guest *and* employee experience—is legendary.

“I don’t work for Disney, Disney works *for* me,” says Michael Kloss, author of *Five Days with the Mouse to be a*

Better Event Planner. “Disney gives me my inspiration.”

This year’s Catersource + The Special Event offered a duo of Disney-specific sessions—*Five Days with the Mouse* (Kloss) and *Meet like a Mouse* (Lenn Millbower)—where conference delegates received a behind-the-scenes peek at what has made Walt Disney World® Resort in Florida and Disneyland® Resort in California two of the happiest places on earth for decades.

“This is not about Disney-fying your event,” Kloss said. “It is about improving our guest experience by learning from Disney.”

Kloss stresses that there are incremental changes and additions you can make to evoke the same joy, excitement, and magic that Disney provides to its guests.

Immersion

When traveling to one of Disney's parks, specifically Walt Disney World, guests are immersed inside a "Disney bubble" as soon as they get off the plane: their airport transportation, the music in the hotel lobby, room décor, and even the shape of their waffles in the morning.

"When they build that bubble you are brought into that ecosystem—everything you do, everything you breathe is part of that experience," Kloss says.

There are a number of different ways to bring that same immersive guest experience into your events through easy additions.

Start the experience early

When thinking about an immersive guest experience, the importance of first impressions can't be underestimated. If your event has a block of hotel rooms reserved for guests, include signage in the lobby welcoming them to your event, or supply in-room branded amenities. If you're providing transportation to and from your event, consider having someone on board to hype the event, build anticipation, and answer questions.

"If you're working with a venue, find out what that first touchpoint is so you can personalize it for your guests," Kloss said. "That first impression is everything, and everything should be part of the experience."

Transform the space

When attending an event, guests should feel transported. They should leave the stresses of everyday life behind, and instead should focus on the here and now.

"Guests should feel as if they are part of another world," Kloss said. "By

transforming the environment, you can take people to another level."

Ushering guests into your event can be done with something as simple as mood lighting, or something as elaborate as over-the-top décor.

When transforming the space however, it's important to take into consideration elements such as sight lines, lighting, and sound to ensure that guests remain in the moment. For example, if a side door is propped open and guests can hear venue staff bustling around, that detracts from the experience. If the stage for a performance isn't properly draped, visible equipment and piles of costumes can be an eyesore.

"You want to keep people in an environment and not have their minds wander out of the story," Kloss said. "You need to identify how to create that kind of hyper-focused attention."

Music and messaging

Having a clear definition of your event's message is one of the most important elements because it not only unifies the experience, but it also re-enforces the reason why guests are there. Disney, if designing your event, would pick one emotional theme and align everything to that theme. It's not a case where you would create a linear story. Rather it's one where you thrust people into your theme.

"If you go to an event without a message, it's simply the same people in a room eating food," Kloss said.

For example, let's say there was an after-hours event in the Africa section of Disney's Animal Kingdom® Theme Park. Beyond the obvious themed surroundings, the party would feature African entertainers, music, food, photo locations, face painting, and giveaways.

"You really have to sensify everything when it comes to messaging," Millbower said. "It's not an intrusion, just a part of the experience."

Consider cadence, too. "Think about Disney's fireworks: there are moments of fire and fury where the world seems to be collapsing around you, and then there's Tinkerbell flying





The RK Group, in partnership with Rosemary's Catering, hosted a "Under the Big Top" birthday celebration, which had a circus theme running throughout the event. Photo courtesy Rosemary's Catering

The Disney Experience

through the sky and suddenly the room changes,” Kloss said. “Beating the same drum at the same volume makes you want to just cover your ears; rather, the presentation should be taking you on an emotional roller coaster.”

The importance of cast and costuming

There’s a reason why employees at Disney’s parks are called cast members, regardless of whether they are costumed, and that’s because they are telling Disney’s story.

The same should be true for your events. Regardless of who it is—planner, server, bartender, busser, cook—everyone should be dedicated to telling the event’s message.

“The moment you stop treating everyone associated with the event—from the greeter at the door to the staff in the AV booth to the front desk—as people who are part of telling the story,” Kloss said, “you are missing out on the opportunity to have so many more voices in that story.” This idea can be evidenced through Disney’s “Performance Theming.” Whether it is the gloomy ghost host at the Haunted Mansion® attraction or the happy bell ringer at the Harbor House Restaurant, the cast members know the “show” they are performing in and theme their behaviors, dialogue, and attire to deliver their “role.”

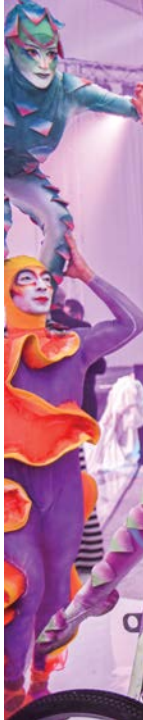
Transition

Having a proper transition in and out of an event can also help with the immersive experience.

“You can’t take somebody cold from the lobby of a hotel and walk into a winter wonderland—it’s too jarring,” Kloss said. “You need a palate cleanser that lets you leave what is behind and enter what is new without it being such a jarring transition.

“The transition point draws you into the new world and helps you clear your mind of where you were before.”

One example of this is at the Magic Kingdom® Theme Park, where a tunnel



A great example of theme would be The Special Event's the Event Experience at Jungle Island, which incorporated many tropical elements, including steel drums, colorful costuming, florals, and performers. Photo courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos



Above: everything during the RK Group event was themed to the circus: the décor, the color scheme (red and white), the performers (circus acts), the layout (three distinct tents for a three-ring circus aesthetic), and even favors for guests (red clown noses). Rosemary herself even became part of the experience! Photo courtesy Rosemary's Catering



connects the Star Wars area of the park with a neighboring area themed with Toy Story and the Muppets. While the tunnel itself isn't themed or decorated, the blank canvas helps visitors decompress from one area of the park to the other.

Transitions are not only important for transitioning from one space to the next, but they're also important for marking the event beginning and end.

While the nightly fireworks display marks the official closing of the day, the park itself doesn't close for almost another hour. You may not be able to go on any more rides, but you are free to enjoy your family's company, take some additional pictures, and ease your way out of the experience. The same idea can be applied to events by simply ending it in the same way "last call" works at a bar.

"You can still make it very clear that it's going to look like the end of the event," Kloss said, "but nobody should be kicking guests out the door."

Instinct

It's all about instinct.

One of the most famous words in the Disney lexicon is "weenies," which are essentially the visual elements that guests are instinctively drawn to, such as the castle at the Magic Kingdom. When Walt was developing Disneyland in the early 1950s he would frequently arrive home late in the evenings, entering through the kitchen to see what Thelma, his housekeeper, was preparing for dinner. He would sometimes grab a "weenie" from the refrigerator as he made his way through the kitchen and share it with his dog, Lady.

He realized that she would follow him wherever he went when he was holding the hot dog because she knew he was going to share it with her. So, while developing the new theme park Walt remembered that he could lead the dog wherever he wanted with a "weenie." This became the term he coined for describing to his Imagineers how to get the guests to go to certain places and directions.

This concept is also familiar to event planners when designing a room layout. One of the most common "weenies" at any event is clearly the bar, where guests tend to gravitate as soon as they enter a venue.

"The guests instinctively know where to go and they do it," Kloss said. "They don't need signage, they don't need a wayfinder, you don't need to push people or to herd cats."

In a similar vein, by incorporating "weenies," or other eye-catching elements into your event, you can encourage your guests to move forward and through your experience.

"Details that distract from the experience detract from its emotional resonance. The reason Disney theme parks work so well is intentionality," Millbower says. "Every detail, no matter how small, is specifically aligned to produce and reinforce the emotional meaning of the scene. That's a concept that is easily transferable to a meeting. Whether it is nondescript table decorations, open doors to the kitchen, or music that does not reinforce the theme, all of it matters."

"If Walt was planning your event, what would it look like?" ●

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FOOD FOR FÊTES



An Afro-Caribbean band paraded through the event delighting attendees.

Mmm-Miami is a *Feast of Flavor*

by Amber Kispert

VISITORS FLOCK TO MIAMI for its rich, vibrant, and internationally influenced cultural scene. Just as importantly, Miami is home to a dynamic food scene that is just as vibrant, refreshing, and diverse as Miami itself.

“You think of Miami, you have this one vision of the beach and sunshine, but you can play on Miami in so many different ways,” says Miami-based designer Ashley Deoleo, who presented *Miami Styled Food Stations* during the Catersource Conference & Tradeshow. “There are so many different ways to do Miami.”

Miami took center stage during The Special Event’s Event Experience, which served up a cornucopia of offerings that placed a keen eye on Miami’s food and beverage offerings. In the

lush setting of Jungle Island, this F&B showcase not only tantalized guests’ tastebuds, but the options also delighted and inspired guests with their creativity.

While Miami’s Cuban and Caribbean flavors reign supreme, other international influences—everything from South American to Russian to Mediterranean to the islands of Haiti and Puerto Rico—can’t be ignored.

“Miami isn’t just about Cuban anymore,” says Chef Elgin Woodman, who co-presented with Deoleo. “Miami is such a blend, it’s a melting pot. There’s a lot of different cultures that come into Miami.”

Want to incorporate Miami-inspired food into your next event? Enjoy this feast for the senses by way of The Event Experience 2021. ●

All photos courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos unless otherwise noted.



(Right) Executive chef Dewey Losasso of Bill Hansen Catering prepared a Lobster BLT bite during The Event Experience that included liquid nitrogen shattered bacon.

(Below) Beautiful display cakes from Earth & Sugar decorated the dessert table



(Above) Lionfish fritters with lime cilantro aioli from Laura Ashley Catering

Jerk in a Cup from Catering CC featuring a jerk chicken bite with coconut milk rice and beans.





FOOD FOR FÊTES

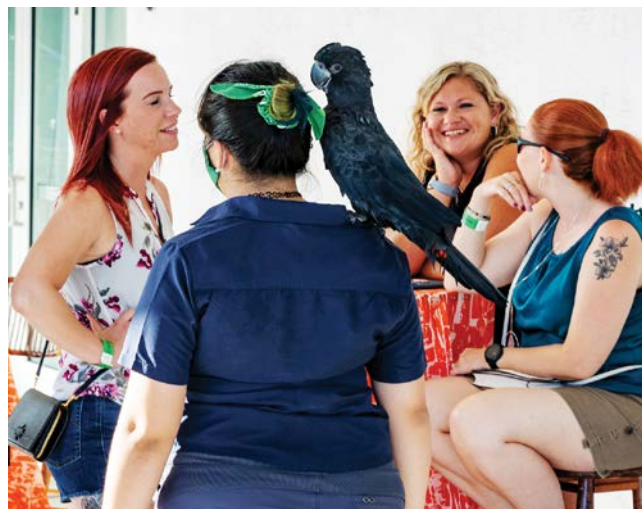


(Left) Sequoia Baking Company provided flavored buns: in tropical flavors: la caridad (guava & cream cheese); Cuba libre (brioche rolled with browned butter and rum filling with Havana Club Anejo and topped with homemade coke and anejo glaze, garnished with dehydrated lime); hazelnut latte made with Cuban coffee; classic cinnamon buns; and honey buns.

(Below) A steel drum, also known as a steelpan, welcomed guests to The Event Experience.



(Above) A roaming raw oyster station with a vodka shooter was provided by Oysters XO; (right) A friendly parrot greeted guests at Jungle Island.



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Ignite the Light

The Closing Night Celebration, held at the Miami Beach Convention Center during The Special Event, brought the events industry together for a night of celebration

If there is one thing this past year has taught us, it's that, "The future of our industry belongs to the power of 'we,'" according to Chad Everett, Chair of The Special Event's Closing Night Celebration. "We are creation machines and we have the power to ignite the light of a thousand dreams."

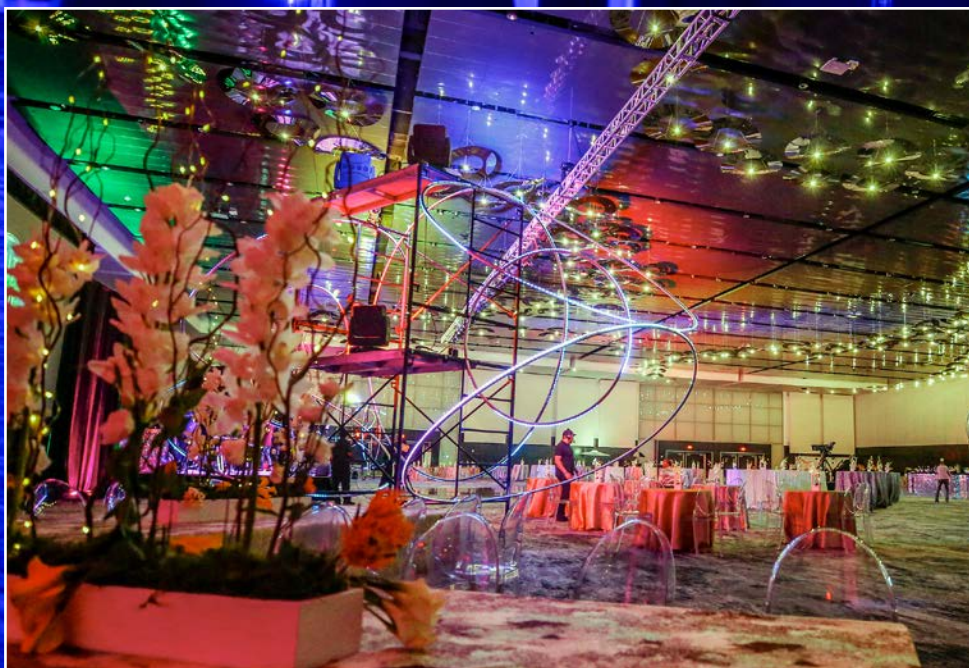
The light was definitely ignited, and for many the dream of once again being together as an industry came true, during The Special Event's Closing Night Celebration held in the Miami Beach Convention Center's Grand Ballroom. This celebration offered a chance for friends and colleagues to celebrate together during an entertainment-filled experience at the culmination of a great week.

Nestled in the heart of Miami Beach, the sleek Miami Beach Convention Center offers flexible special event and exhibition spaces near beautiful beaches, fine dining, and 5-star resorts. The MBCC welcomes more than 600,000 visitors annually and is located just 12 miles away from Miami International Airport.

Everett, with Galaxy Productions, described the event, dubbed "Ignite Your Light," as an immersive experiential journey chronicling the event industries' greatest endeavor: the global shutdown. Beyond the flashy lights, cutting edge holographic projection, and inspired scenery, the celebration presented a truly immersive theatrical production where poetry and technology collided. ●

By Amber Kispert

All photos courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos unless otherwise noted.



(Above and top right) The Opening Night Celebration's central theme, "Ignite Your Light" was evident throughout the event space through illuminations and the use of LEDs.

(Right, shown pre-event) a combination of seated tables and standing cocktail tables imbued the space with elegance.

(Background image) An illuminated tunnel ushered guests into the celebration in a stunning fashion.

Ignite the **Light**





Live entertainment accentuated the celebration throughout the evening.



Keynote and motivational speaker Marvelless Mark served as host and master of ceremonies for the event.



A fun addition to the celebration included a CrêpeMaker station, where fresh crêpes were prepared on demand.

(Opposite page, clockwise, starting upper right) Incorporating differing textures into floral centerpieces can go a long way to adding depth.

Centerplate offered delicious bites throughout the evening.

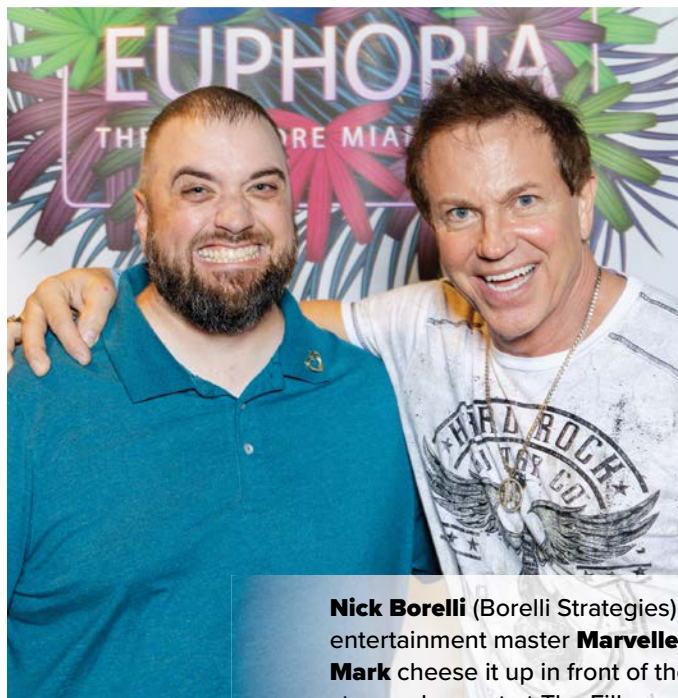
A lighted, geometrical structure served as a backdrop for many of the performances during the Opening Night Celebration.

Galaxy Productions' Immersive Entertainment combined entertainment, art, and technology, and a theatrical experience where guests became part of the show.

AS SEEN IN *Miami*



Adonica Coleman (VenueLive Solutions) rocked red at The Fillmore, site of Catersource + The Special Event's Opening Night Party.



Nick Borelli (Borelli Strategies) and entertainment master **Marvelous Mark** cheese it up in front of the step and repeat at The Fillmore.

July in Miami was a sight to behold during Catersource + The Special Event as a sea of smiling faces could be found around every corner. After over a year apart, friends and colleagues were once again able to come together, whether it was shooting the breeze over a drink during one of the evening showcasing events or being inspired together within the Miami Beach Convention Center. Being together has never felt better. ●

— Amber Kispert & Kathleen Stoehr



Steve Kemble (Steve Kemble Event Design), **Jaclyn Bernstein** (Empire Force Events), **Michael Cerbelli** (Cerbelli Creative) and **Larry Green** (Rentals Unlimited) cut loose at the opening night event, Euphoria.

Be a Part of The Special Event 2022

Call for Speakers is now open for both Catersource Conference & Tradeshow and The Special Event, which will be co-located in Anaheim, CA May 2–5, 2022. Go to thespecialeventshow.com for conference information, or tse2022.catersource-cfp.com to pitch a session topic.

All photos courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos unless otherwise noted.



The SEARCH fundraiser event and catering presentation. From left: **Lillian Shen** (COO, Entertainment), **Judy** (Hotel), and **Lindsey** (Hotel).



Leigh-Ann Reitze, System Marketing Events Coordinator at UPMC Pinnacle, and **Teri Jakob**, Making the Magic Happen, could be seen scooting around the Miami Beach Convention Center and at evening events the entire week.



From left: **Evan Carbotti**, **Ingrid Adolphs**, and **Jordan Carbotti**, all of Carbotti Experiences, at the Leadership Lunch, where Robin Selden of Marcia Selden Catering & Events was presented with the Richard Carbotti Award. Evan and Jordan are Richard Carbotti's sons, now co-owners of the company their father started.



...sing event raises money for professionals in crisis. Shown from (RT), **Michelle Polci** (Caesars RT), **Renee Dalo** (Moxie Bright Events), **CeCe Todd** (CeCe Designs and Events), and **Aleya Harris** (Flourish Marketing).



Catersource + The Special Event speakers have a hallway meetup (left to right) **Jamie Quickert** (AllSeated), **Renee Dalo** (Moxie Bright Events), **Terrica Skaggs** (Terrica Inc.), **CeCe Todd** (CeCe Designs and Events), and **Aleya Harris** (Flourish Marketing). *Photo courtesy Jamie Quickert*



Editor's note: *It was an absolute privilege to see **David Tutera** step onto our keynote stage this past July to offer a show-closing talk on taking chances. Pre-event, we all appreciated how much David was willing to collaborate with us to ensure our experience with him was exceptional. He truly lives what he espouses: "You must always put the work in and never rely on your reputation." Hats off to you, David! —Kathleen*

Be Bold. Be You...and Breathe

By David Tutera

The Special Event show played a big part in my entrance into the world of events as a professional. It was the very first convention I ever attended, and I immediately gravitated toward the energy and all of the talent, experts, and events. It allowed me to get a glimpse of how much I was going to love this industry. In fact, my very first speaking appearance happened in front of just 40 guests in a breakout room, showing that kicking off one's career with baby steps is typical and even often needed.

Years later I was asked to design The Special Event's Gala Awards in Texas and Orlando, and I was happy to accept the honor to do so. A year into the convention, my speaking appearances become longer in length and larger in attendance, so for me to come back after many years and close Catersource + The Special Event 2021 was an honor. I take stepping onto any stage to share my knowledge and to elevate our industry very seriously. My message for the closing session touched on how to step forward with strength and confidence, as well as understanding the importance of leading with kindness.

Be BOLD, Be YOU... and BREATHE!

A quote I like to keep in mind while navigating my career is, "chaos causes confusion and confusion causes chaos." It helps me stress that professionals must stay organized and surround themselves with others that (themselves) believe they are great—because they are.

We must look to support and guide others and understand that we must be willing to help anyone that may appear to need some love, support, and guidance. Life is not only about focusing on ourselves, but also about sharing what we have within ourselves with others so they too can take the necessary steps to succeed. Success is measured in various ways. In my eyes, I believe success is the gratitude you feel within yourself for what you have created or produced for a client. Success can be the simplicity of finding time to pause, breathe, and be present with your partner, your children, and yourself.

I have learned the importance in teaching one another while remaining humble. Our industry is one that requires an enormous amount of work, time, and patience. You must always put the work in and never assume that you can rely on your reputation. It's important to always reinvent yourself and stand out so you can be hired!

Following this mindset, I've accrued three decades of being in the event planning business, 20 years of being on television, I've authored eight books, and have had countless lines of retail product for two decades.

You can't sit and wait for what is next... it's up to you to figure out what is next for you. Stop worrying, stop questioning yourself, and make your move to stand out and be a leader. We need more leaders that are honest, open, and willing to share. This is what will elevate our industry.

With passion comes success. ●

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A CHEF'S ROLE IN
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WASTE

P. 32

EVENT
SOLUTIONS:
A EUPHORIC
NIGHT IN MIAMI

P. 48

{8} Cocktails &
Coupes—Recipes for
Your Fall Bar Program

{52} Picks & Sticks for
Easy Serving

Your Hospitality Staffing. Well Served.



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contents

FALL 2021
VOLUME 19, NUMBER 3



features

- 12... FIRST IN, LAST OUT**
Catersource + The Special Event made its triumphant return in Miami
- 32... WASTE NOT**
The chef's role in reducing food waste



Behind the Cover

Asked by wedding planner Phaedra Laikou to develop a cocktail for an Ellwed magazine styled shoot, the result was this darkly gorgeous libation from Petit Camion of Greece, which is perfect for the Halloween season. Turn to page 8 for the recipe. Photo courtesy Lefteris Kalampokas

departments

- 04... FOREWORD**
My favorite memories
- 06... ICA'S THE DISH**
Advocating for your business during times of crisis
- 08... IN THE GLASS**
Stage a coup(e)!
- 26... THE C-SUITE**
How are you spending your time?
- 28... CONFERENCE NEWS**
Catersource celebrates its 30th anniversary in Anaheim, CA
- 38... SUCCESSFUL SELLING**
Get a head start on your holiday sales strategy
- 40... FROM THE CONSULTANTS**
Declaring a new future
- 44... ON THE MENU**
Chef Winston Williams showcases Floribbean cuisine
- 48... EVENT SOLUTIONS**
Catersource + The Special Event's Opening Night Party was euphoric
- 52... STEAL THIS**
Picks & Sticks
- 54... AS SEEN IN...**
Miami was a sea of smiling faces during Catersource + The Special Event
- 56... THE DIGESTIF**
Final thoughts from Reuben Bell



My Favorite Moments

Our industry is comprised of, as Brett Culp noted in 2020 during Michael Cerbelli's: The Hot List™, "one hundred million moments." One hundred million moments of beauty, of majestic vision, of connection, of friendship, of glory, and yes, of darkness.

He endeavored to remind us that our work often goes unpraised—at times unnoticed—and yet we continue with it because it is our passion. He is so completely correct.

Putting together Catersource + The Special Event during a pandemic was difficult, and we experienced many of the issues you have had over the past year and a half. These barriers did not break our resolve. Because of that, because we were able to gather safely, we could add more beautiful moments to our work lives, many covered on pages 12 to 25. Here are just a few of mine:

- At the Thursday Leadership Lunch, every award recipient thanked those people who supported them throughout their careers and in turn, all received standing ovations. This luncheon was by far one of the most emotional I've ever attended; I wasn't the only one who shed tears. I am thankful I was able to be a part of it.
- The exceptionally talented chef, Keith Lord, told me that if I brought the champagne, he would bring the caviar. On Wednesday afternoon shortly after his hands-on plating class, a few of us were in the Convention Center kitchen—our headquarters for Culinary Experience stage prep. Chef Lord popped open a tin and dabbed a mound onto the area between my thumb and forefinger. We bumped fists and then savored the caviar. Sadly, no time for champagne; it was back to work for me!
- Walking into the SEARCH Foundation event on Wednesday evening, treasurer Frank Puleo said, "I'm so glad you made it! It's an honor to have you here." Me? Those words felt *good*.
- Hanging at the Loews bar with my friend, Roy Porter, we watched our Italian bartender mix our cocktails as we discussed the flavor profile of Campari. Our mixologist was so delightful, we returned another night with hopes we could be within his talented radius once more.
- Mary Crafts and Joann Roth-Oseary (among others) thanking me profusely for pulling our conference and tradeshow together. They conveyed such gratitude. I was quick to note, "it takes a village." Truly, my colleagues are miracle workers.

I'm stopping here. I just re-read my bullet points and realized that all my special show moments were because people of exceptional character, talent, and quality made them so. I couldn't hope for anything more...except for one other thing: that I will be able to add to my moments next year in Anaheim, with all of you.

Until then, be strong, stay creative, and live your best lives. Oh! And turn to page 28 for the first emerging details about Anaheim 2022. Cheers!

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PASTURE-RAISED LAMB

READY-TO-SERVE



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Diced Competition
at Catersource 2021!

To inquire about samples, email
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Advocating for Your Business During Times of Crisis



The International Caterers Association is proud to be a resource for catering industry professionals across the globe to create connections and access education that will help catering businesses thrive.

This past year and a half, much of those efforts have been centered around support, compassionate camaraderie, and providing resources for advocacy and assistance during perhaps the most difficult era any of us can remember for our industry—and the world. A recent roundtable discussion was a magnificent display of just how passionate and unwavering catering executives can be. Led by Jonathan Jennings, executive vice president of Connecticut Wedding Group and the ICA treasurer, the group discussed the importance of advocating for your business during times of crisis—as well as how you can continue to do so during the choppy and unpredictable waters ahead. Here's what they shared!

Understanding advocacy in the catering industry in the wake of COVID-19

The first step to advocating for your business is truly understanding what advocacy is. A simple definition of advocacy is an activity by an individual or group that aims to influence decisions within political, economic and social institutions.

Advocate groups come in many shapes and forms. You have organizations like ours, the ICA, which is rooted in industry education and awareness to support and inform caterers across the globe. But then you also have local groups like the Connecticut Restaurant Association and Events Industry Coalition of Connecticut, who are fighting for local catering rights and are involved with governmental issues. Then you have paid membership groups, invitation-only groups like Leading Caterers

of America, and social professional groups. All serve an important role in understanding paths to advocacy in this era, and it's important to be involved in all if you truly want to make a difference for the industry you love.

During the pandemic, Jennings was a voice in Connecticut—and nationally—to include catering companies in the restaurant restrictions and benefits. Initially, he joined the Connecticut Restaurant Association (CRA) to be more involved and ultimately used all avenues above to ensure that no conversation about restaurants excluded catering.

In order for businesses to get the support they needed financially and in terms of restrictions being lifted, the industry had to speak up, and Jennings led the pack. The CRA had media contacts to make sure the issue was heard and had relationships with the lawmakers able to implement change. Last year, they got the governor to sit down with the CRA group to hear out members' challenges during COVID. He listened and accepted their input on how the local government could craft regulations based on the industry while still considering health and safety. This ultimately ensured that the voices of the catering industry were being heard while local policies that directly affected their businesses were being created.

Five steps to becoming a catering industry advocate now

If you want to become an advocate, here are five steps you can take today to get started!

Build your network

The more people you know, the greater influence you'll likely be able to have. Your network—personal and professional—can never be too large! By getting to know

your mayor, state representatives, governor, leaders of local catering organizations and more, you can get ahead of the next crisis. By building those relationships now, it may ensure they're more likely to answer your call and offer support when you need them most.

Determine your involvement goals

Will you advocate on the local, state or federal level? Maybe all three! Have a goal so you don't get too overwhelmed and have a path to follow to reach your advocacy goals. Will you do it in person? Or maybe via your social media to reach larger audiences? It's up to you.

Take the time to educate yourself

Advocacy starts with education and learning. You must be knowledgeable and able to synthesize an informed angle to advocate for your business. Understand what's impacting your business and the world and determine ways you think you can fix it for the greater good of all.

Pro Tip: Set up Google alerts for topics that interest you and pertain to your business so you can read and share the moment they hit the news!

Ask for help & be kind

Part of advocacy is coming together. One thing to remember is that you're

not in this fight alone. You have an entire industry, a family, behind you who will guide the way as you're walking this path to being an advocate. Ask those who are more involved and experienced where to start if you're not sure! Ask friends in the industry to join you in this journey.

And once you start, don't forget to be nice to those who can help you. Elected officials have a tough gig; they're just humans trying to do their best like we are. During crises like these, it's easy to let emotions get in the way—stay clear, stick to the point and ask directly for what you need. You want to make it easy for the elected officials to help you out, not push them away and make their job more difficult. Work as a team and you'll see great progress.

Start small

You don't have to go out and lead a movement during your first weeks of becoming an advocate for our industry. Simply start with one call, one conversation, one contact. The smallest gestures can still have a big impact!

In fact, you can start now with one small action!

By filling out this [simple form](#), you can automatically send a message to your members of Congress,



During the pandemic, Jonathan Jennings was a voice in Connecticut—and nationally—to include catering companies in the restaurant restrictions and benefits.”

asking them to refill the Restaurant Revitalization Fund to support those independent restaurants still struggling due to the pandemic.

Join a network of professionals & passionate catering advocates with the ICA

If you're feeling inspired and want to be surrounded by this palpable energy shared by catering industry executives, chefs and team members, join us. [CS](#)

Connecticut Wedding Group is a proud member of the ICA. For more information, visit internationalcaterers.org.





By Kathleen Stoehr

Stage a Coup(e)!

As the fall season approaches, delicate and fresh summer imbibes give way to spirit-forward lowballs and cocktails served “up.” Need a few fresh ideas to invigorate your fall/winter beverage menus? This bartender has your back with three winners that celebrate the coming chill of winter, minus the ice.



THE CINNAMON VAPOR BUBBLE ON THE CANDELA COCKTAIL IS PLACED WITH A FLAVOUR BLASTER GUN, WHICH RETAILS FOR ABOUT \$400 ONLINE. PHOTO COURTESY CLANE GESSEL PHOTOGRAPHY

CANDELA

Another cocktail from Justin Pasha of The Cup Bearer served during Michael Cerbelli's: The Hot List™, the Candela is a delicious sipper with a smoky cinnamon topper that pops upon first sip.

CANDELA

2 oz. Plantation Pineapple Rum
.25 oz. demerara sugar syrup
3 dashes chocolate bitters
Orange peel
Cinnamon vapor bubble

DIRECTIONS

Combine all liquid ingredients inside a mixing glass, add ice and stir well. Strain into coupe glass, garnish with orange peel and cinnamon vapor using a Flavour Blaster gun.

For more information on the brains behind these cocktails, check out:

THE CUP BEARER

Insta: @the_cup_bearer

Website:
www.thecupbearer.com

PETIT CAMION

Insta: @petitcamion

Website:
www.petitcamion.gr

MELON MAMMA

A spin on a traditional margarita, the Melon Mamma from Justin Pasha of The Cup Bearer adds a whiff of smoke via a couple barspoons of mezcal. Be sure to double strain for best result.

MELON MAMMA

2 oz tequila
.25 oz mezcal
1 oz fresh lime juice
.75 oz agave syrup
3 cubes watermelon
Tajin dusted rim

DIRECTIONS

Muddle melon and agave together inside shaker, add all liquid ingredients along with ice, shake vigorously, double strain cocktail into coupe glass with Tajin dusted rim, garnish with melon slice.


THE MELON MAMMA, SERVED ON STAGE DURING MICHAEL CERBELLI'S: THE HOT LIST™ INCORPORATES TEQUILA AND MEZCAL WITH A WATERMELON WEDGE AS THE EYECATCHER. PHOTO COURTESY WTA PHOTO VIA SPOTMYPHOTOS

JUSTIN PASHA SERVES MICHAEL CERBELLI AND GUEST (NOT SHOWN) ONSTAGE AT MICHAEL CERBELLI'S: THE HOT LIST™ 2021.



A PERFECT COCKTAIL FOR THE HALLOWEEN SEASON, **THE PETIT CAQUIRI** IS A DARK PLAY ON A CONVENTIONAL DAIQUIRI. PHOTO COURTESY LEFTERIS KALAMPOKAS

PETIT CAQUIRI

Asked by wedding planner Phaedra Laikou to develop a cocktail for an Ellwed magazine styled shoot, the result was this darkly gorgeous libation from Petit Camion of Greece. Petit Camion is Greek for “Small Truck,” and this mobile bar service is one you should definitely follow on Instagram. 

PETIT CAQUIRI

2 oz. Plantation Pineapple Rum
2 oz blueberry infused rum
.66 oz fresh lime juice
.66 oz blackcurrant syrup
.33 oz cherry liquor
2 dashes cranberry bitters
A small pinch of black edible food color

METHOD

Combine all ingredients in a shaker, add ice. Shake vigorously. Strain into coupe glass. Garnish with a slice of black fig (or dry fig upon availability). Dry ice for “show” only, remove upon serving.

Say Hello!

to the growing Boursin® family
of culinary ingredients

NEW

Boursin® Professional
Gournay Cheese Garlic &
Fine Herbs, 2.2lb tub



NEW

Boursin® Professional
Frozen Gournay Cheese Cubes,
Garlic & Fine Herbs, 1.65 lbs



Boursin® Gournay Cheese
Garlic & Fine Herbs, 5.2oz



NEW

Boursin® Dairy Free Garlic &
Herbs Cheese Spread
Alternative, 6oz

As seen
during the
Diced
Competition



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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
THROUGHOUT THE EVENING
ACCENTUATED THE CLOSING
NIGHT CELEBRATION.



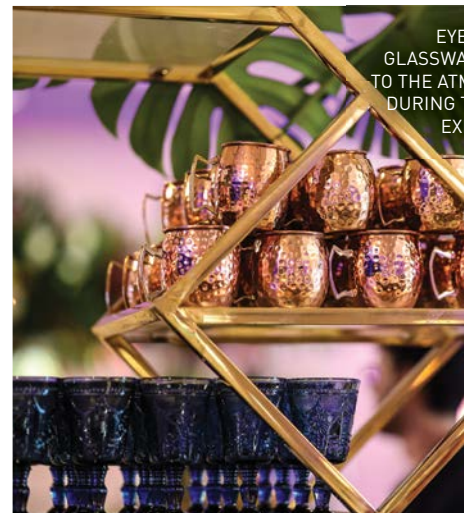
FIRST IN, LAST

Catersource + The Special Event makes its
triumphant return in Miami

BY AMBER KISPERT



A GIANT, GLOWING
LIGHT BULB WAS A
BEACON TO THE BAR.



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CATERSOURCE + THE SPECIAL EVENT WAS HELD THIS JULY IN MIAMI BEACH.



ELEGANCE WAS THE NAME OF THE GAME DURING THE CLOSING NIGHT CELEBRATION.

ST OUT!

Last out of Vegas in '20 as the pandemic took hold of the world, and first into Miami Beach in '21 as cases diminished, Catersource + The Special Event made its triumphant return this past July. "The sun rises on our new industry... there's a new day coming—this is the start of something new for all of us," said Michael Cerbelli. "Live events are here, and they're here to stay."

In the next few pages you will have the opportunity to relive the inspiration, memories, and Miami vibes that were over a year in the making. But first, we'd like to take this opportunity to not only thank this year's attendees for bringing their enthusiasm, but also express our sincere appreciation to our speakers, sponsors, and exhibitors for providing the conference top-notch experiences this year.

All photos courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos unless otherwise noted



California dreamin'

Registration will open on Nov. 12 for Catersource + The Special Event's co-located conference in Anaheim, CA, **May 2-5, 2022.** Go to conference.catersource.com for more information and www.catersource.com for updates on speakers, sessions, and events.

catersource + **THE SPECIAL EVENT**

MAY 2-5, 2022 | ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER

BACK TOGETHER & IT FEELS SO GOOD

KEYNOTE SPEAKER **PABLOS HOLMAN** SPOKE TO INVENTION AND INNOVATION AND HOW THAT CAN HELP SOLVE THE CATERING AND EVENTS INDUSTRY'S BIGGEST PROBLEMS.

One of the overarching themes throughout the week was togetherness.

Not only was the week about reconnecting with friends and colleagues, but it was also about the unified struggle and support that the industry encountered during the past year.

"Yes, it was hard, yes there were trying times, but we made it through the way we always do: together," said Aleya Harris, with Flourish Marketing.

That feeling of togetherness could be seen in varying ways, even when there was a competition and trophy on the line.

"We are not competitors. We are colleagues. We hold each other up," said Julia Kendrick Conway of Assaggiare Mendocino, during the Diced Competition, held Wednesday morning on the Tradeshow Floor.

The message of togetherness only became more powerful when discussing the industry's future.

"We need to come together as a family," Cerbelli said. "We cannot trip right now."

For keynote speaker Pablos Holman, it's together that the industry can find the solutions to move forward and take action.

"We need to identify what we can build from the rubble, together we can learn what's possible," he said. "We have to invent new tools for the arsenal, we need allies, and we need to find those people who know how to solve these problems."



CHRISTOPHER EVAN T. PRESENTED GET ON THE TRAIL WITH CATERING



BOB PACANOVSKY HANDS-ON TRAINING ON HOW TO EXECUTE A SUCCESSFUL DINNER EXPERIENCE

ON THE TRADESHOW FLOOR,
CHEFS **JOSHUE BUTLER**
(LEFT) AND **FRANKIE RUIZ**
(RIGHT) OF US FOODS,
PRESENTED ON THE
CULINARY MAIN STAGE.



AYLOR
THE LIST
GIFTS!!



CATERSOURCE + THE SPECIAL EVENT'S
SHOW AMBASSADORS: **HEATHER**
ROUFFE (ATLAS EVENT RENTAL)
AND **BILL HANSEN** (BILL HANSEN
CATERING).

Y GAVE
N HOW
SSFUL
IENCE.



CELEBRITY EVENT PLANNER
DAVID TUTERA DELIVERED THE
CLOSING KEYNOTE.



LEIGH-ANN REITZE, SYSTEMS MARKETING EVENT COORDINATOR AT UPI PINNACLE, AND TERI JAKO, MAKING THE MAGIC HAPPEN ENJOY SOME TAQUITO DURING CONNECT LIVE

BELOW: AN ASSORTMENT OF DELECTABLE DESSERTS WERE FEATURED DURING THE EVENT EXPERIENCE

IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE!

The feeling of togetherness was no more evident than during Catersource + The Special Event's evening Showcasing Events, filled with smiles, conversation, and celebratory cocktail toasts.

Tuesday evening kicked off with Connect Live at the Hard Rock Café for a night of networking and reconnecting, followed by the Opening Night Party on Wednesday at the Fillmore Miami Beach which featured live entertainment, appetizing bites and lush décor (turn to page 48 for an event recap).

Thursday's Event Experience at Jungle Island was a true food and beverage showcase with a tropical twist (turn to page 74 in *Special Events* magazine for a full recap). Bringing this year's conference to a close was the Closing Night Celebration at the Miami Beach Convention Center's Grand Ballroom (turn to page 78 in *Special Events* magazine for a full event recap).



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CENTERPLATE PROVIDED
A PLETHORA OF BITES
DURING THE CLOSING NIGHT
CELEBRATION.



LEFT: THE HARD ROCK CAFÉ, THE VENUE FOR CONNECT LIVE, OFFERED BREATHTAKING VIEWS OF THE MIAMI SKYLINE. **ABOVE:** A LUSH AND TROPICAL ARCHWAY GREETED GUESTS TO THE EVENT EXPERIENCE AT JUNGLE ISLAND.

Be a Part of Catersource 2022

Call for Speakers is now open for both Catersource Conference & Tradeshow and The Special Event, which will be co-located in Anaheim, CA May 2–5, 2022. Go to www.catersource.com for conference information, or cs2022.catersource-cfp.com to pitch a session topic.

catersource + **THE SPECIAL EVENT**

MAY 2-5, 2022 | ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Catersource Culinary Experience stage has always enticed guests with cooking demonstrations, displays, and trends. Chef Greg

Taylor presented *The Business of Food Displays*, discussing ways to set up a COVID-safe buffet, showing a fully tricked out buffet that attendees could photograph; Chef Elgin Woodman and designer Ashley Deoleo presented *Miami Styled Food Stations* offering a lavish and colorful presentation that set imaginations afire. Chef Emily Ellyn discussed how to perfectly showcase, plate, and execute small-plated dishes during *Small Plates, Big Return*.

Live cooking demonstrations included Sodexo's Chef Joseph Pina on *Toasts, Sandwiches & Sliders: The Perfect Serve*, and cannabis expert and classically trained chef Brandon Allen prepared unique and appetizing tastes via his session,

Cannabis Cuisine. Ellyn, well known for her prowess with cocktails, hit the stage once again for *Shaking Up an Industry That's Already Stirred*. A playful addition to the culinary stage this year were café tables, set to the far sides, which offered attendees the ability to sit on stage near the presenter and experience the action close-up.

The art of beautiful plating was on the menu this year for Chef Keith Lord who shared his insider tips during his session *Breaking the Culinary Rules: Adding Cash—and Cache—to Your Menu Offerings*, before giving attendees a chance to test out their skills during his *Hands-On Elevated Plating Techniques* session.

"It's about redefining what we're doing with a simple tweak of the plate," Lord said during his hands-on session. "It's about identifying what we can do differently in order to keep people excited about our food."

One thing that will never change though is the ever-popular food trend sessions. The always charismatic Stavros of M Culinary talked tacos, street food, frozen treats, charcuterie, and even nacho bars with cheese on draft. Colorado's Catering by Design's Syd Sexton took trends one step further by additionally discussing how we serve with her session on *Trendsetting Food Stations in Our New Normal*.



DURING THE BUSINESS OF FOOD DISPLAYS SESSION **CHEF GREG TAYLOR** (INSET) SHOWCASED A BEAUTIFUL BUFFET AS A WAY TO EDUCATE ATTENDEES ABOUT HOW TO PROPERLY EXECUTE THE CLIENT EXPERIENCE BY BUILDING A FOOD DISPLAY. BUFFET PHOTO COURTESY AMBER KISPERT



ATTENDEES PRACTICED THEIR PLATING SKILLS DURING HANDS-ON ELEVATED PLATING TECHNIQUES. PHOTO COURTESY AMBER KISPERT

BELOW: **CHEF KEITH LORD** SHARED HIS PLATING TIPS DURING TWO SEPARATE SESSIONS, ONE LECTURE STYLE, AND ONE HANDS ON.



LEFT: **CHEF EMILY ELLYN** GAVE A COCKTAIL DEMONSTRATION DURING HER SESSION *SHAKING UP AN INDUSTRY THAT'S STIRRED*.

GET ON BOARD



CHEF CHIP OLSZEWSKI FROM BONURA HOSPITALITY GROUP WAS CHOSEN AS THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD DURING THE DICED COMPETITION WITH HIS BOARD, "COUNTRY HARVEST."



CHEF CHRISTOPHER EVAN TAYLOR OF CHRIS EVANS EVENTS AND CATERING TOOK HOME THE COVETED TROPHY DURING THE DICED COMPETITION WITH HIS DECONSTRUCTED BREAKFAST BOARD FEATURING A LAMB HASH TOPPED WITH A SPICY CHEESE FONDUE ALONG WITH A YOLKY EGG; AND ACCOMPANIED BY CROSTINIS AND JAM.

The annual Diced competition got a makeover for 2021 by challenging competitors to create grazing boards, which hit an all-time high in 2021 as an option for at-home entertaining, or as an alternative to traditional grazing stations.

"It's Lunchables for adults," competition emcee Chef Emily Ellyn joked.

Chef Christopher Evan Taylor of Chris Evans Events and Catering took home the coveted Diced trophy and a \$1,500 prize with a creative interpretation of a charcuterie board with his entry titled "Southern Hash Charcuterie

Brunch Breakfast Yumminess," which judge Ron Ben-Israel playfully renamed "Sunnyside All the Way."

For the competition, Taylor prepared a deconstructed breakfast board featuring a lamb hash topped with a spicy cheese fondue along with a yolky egg and accompanied by crostinis and jam.

"It is incredible. I love the creative remix on the idea of a tasting board. It's not your typical platter," Ellyn said. "This is très chic."

"Your egg yolk quivers like my heart, yet it stays firmly in my chest," Ben-Israel said.

Chef Chip Olszewski from Bonura Hospitality Group was chosen as the People's Choice Award winner with his board, "Country Harvest." For that, he received a \$500 Amazon gift card.

Watch for Diced 2022 in Anaheim next May!



SODEXO'S CHEF JOSEPH PINA
NAMED HIS DICED BOARD
"FUSION FOR AGES."



CHEF ROBERT MITCHELL OF
BOLD CATERING & DESIGN
PREPARED "LATE NIGHT
IN MIAMI" FOR THE DICED
COMPETITION.



CHEF GREG TAYLOR OF BLACK
FOX CO. NAMED HIS DICED
BOARD "FLORIDA WAS A
GOOD TRIP." CHEF RON BEN-
ISRAEL SUGGESTED "ORANGE
SURPRISE," GIVEN THE CARVED
ORANGE BORE HIS LIKENESS.



JULIA KENDRICK CONWAY
OF ASSAGGIARE MENDOCINO
SUBMITTED HER BOARD "COLORS
OF THE RAINBOW, FLAVORS
OF WORLD" IN THE DICED
COMPETITION.



THE ANNUAL CATERSOURCE
DICED COMPETITION WAS HELD
ON WEDNESDAY DURING THE
TRADESHOW AND CHALLENGED
COMPETITORS TO PREPARE A
CHARCUTERIE BOARD. (FEATURED)
CHEF JOSEPH PINA OF SODEXO



GRAMMY AWARD WINNING MUSICIAN, **TOMASITO CRUZ** (CENTER) SANG TO GUESTS AS THEY ENTERED THE LUNCHEON SPACE. PHOTO COURTESY KATHLEEN STOEHR

WHERE THEY LEAD, WE WILL FOLLOW

If 2020 taught us anything, it was the importance of company leadership. During times of crisis, employees look to business owners and managers to help them navigate the unruly waters.

Catersource + The Special Event recognized those leaders who were able to support their teams and navigate them through an unprecedented year during the Leadership Lunch, held at the W Hotel. This year's recipients were Roy Porter (Michael Roman Lifetime Achievement Award), Connie Riley (Gala Lifetime Achievement Award), Robin Selden (Richard Carbotti Award), and Jaclyn Bernstein (Steve Kemble Leadership Award).

Leadership also found its place among the conference agenda as well with such sessions as Anthony Lambatos' *Be the Leader You Want to Be*; and Kate Patay presented *Critical Leadership & Communication*.

David Tutera's closing keynote, *How to Be Bold in 2021*, brought the point home as he explained his thoughts on another trait he felt leaders needed to embody: boldness.

"There's boldness in most people to become leaders," he said. "Given the right set of circumstances, many will take action to better the world around them. There isn't someone on a white horse coming; it might happen in Disney but it doesn't happen here, so we need to rescue ourselves.

"More now than ever we need to find our footing, and step forward with boldness and confidence."

ROBIN SELDEN FROM MARCIA SELDEN CATERING WAS THE RECIPIENT OF THIS YEAR'S RICHARD CARBOTTI AWARD, HANDED OUT DURING THE LEADERSHIP LUNCH.



ROY PORTER WAS HONORED DURING THE LEADERSHIP LUNCH WITH THE MICHAEL ROMAN LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD.



[illegible]

ACE *Gala*

A W A R D S

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SPECIAL EVENTS

BACK IN THE EVENT GROOVE

Identifying creative event ideas and trends also played an integral part throughout the week with sessions on wedding trends (Meghan Ely; Robin and Jeffrey Selden), bringing fundraising events virtual (AJ Williams), and CeCe Todd spoke about how to *Elevate Your 2021 Events with Florals*.

Finally, each year Michael Cerbelli (Cerbelli Creative) presents Michael Cerbelli's: The Hot List™, highlighting the best event and catering trends through performances, demonstrations, and onstage spectacles. This year he took a slightly different tact, focusing heavily on conversations with industry partners (Jordan Kahn, Rob Barber, David Lombardo, and others) regarding the future of the industry, and how they were able to weather the pandemic. "We need to take a look ahead at the industry that was forced to catapult five years into the future," Cerbelli said.

Ever-popular comedian Harrison Greenbaum presented a virtual routine that left the audience in stitches, and despite the early morning, everyone in the audience wanted to try the spectacular cocktails presented with finesse by Justin Pasha of The Cup Bearer. Brett Culp opened and closed the show with a follow up to his 100 Million Moments video of 2020. Finally, a live performance from viral sensation Dr. Elvis Francois (the 'Singing Surgeon') stunned the audience with its beauty and reminded us all how much our frontline caregivers gave of themselves during the worst of the pandemic. A subdued Michael Cerbelli? Yes. A beautiful and transformative event? As always. **CS**



(ABOVE) 2021 WAS SUPPOSED MARK THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY FOR MICHAEL CERBELLI'S: THE HOT LIST™, WHICH IT WAS, BUT NEXT YEAR WILL BE THE "21ST BIRTHDAY PARTY EDITION, THE BIGGEST, BADDEST PRODUCTION YOU'VE EVER SEEN," CERBELLI SAID.

(RIGHT) CONNECTICUT'S THE CUP BEARER, A COCKTAIL EXPERIENCE COMPANY, OFFERED A LIVE MIXOLOGY DEMONSTRATION DURING THE HOT LIST. SHOWN: FLAIR BARTENDER ANDRE ICHIM





DR. ELVIS FRANCOIS, WHO BECAME A VIRAL SESSION DURING THE PANDEMIC WITH HIS VERSION OF JOHN LENNON'S "IMAGINE," CLOSED THE HOT LIST WITH A PERFORMANCE THAT DIDN'T LEAVE A DRY EYE IN THE HOUSE.



(ABOVE TOP) THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE HOT LIST, **MICHAEL CERBELLI** AND HIS ON-STAGE GUESTS, INCLUDING **DAVID LOMBARDO**, WERE SERVED VARIOUS COCKTAILS BY **JUSTIN PASHA** OF THE CUP BEARER. SHOWN HERE **LOMBARDO** AND **CERBELLI** ENJOY CANDELAS.

(ABOVE) **FUNNY FACE BAKERY** CAN MAKE EDIBLE DEPICTIONS OF ANY NUMBER OF PEOPLE OR THINGS, INCLUDING **DAVID LOMBARDO**.



(ABOVE) FOLLOWING THE HOT LIST, **JUSTIN PASHA** OF THE CUP BEARER PROVIDED A CHAMPAGNE POUR FOR A COMMUNAL TOAST.



(LEFT) **JORDAN KAHN** (**JORDAN KAHN MUSIC COMPANY**) REPRESENTS MANY BANDS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES, INCLUDING **STRATOSPHERE** WHO PERFORMED DURING THE HOT LIST.



How are you spending your time?

Owners and executives of companies have numerous demands on their time, yet there's only 24 hours in a day. No matter how much we can accomplish during any given day, we rarely respond to all the emails, calls, social obligations, fill our need to exercise, get enough sleep, eat healthfully, and address all of our family responsibilities.

Leo Babauta wrote, "The problem isn't that we have too little time—we all get the same amount of time each day and each week. It's the exact right amount of time, because it's all there is. It's possible that we have too many things to do. But the real problem is that we want to do too much in the time we have."

I have found that it can be exceedingly difficult to differentiate between the "urgent" and the "important." The fact that something needs to be done right away presents the illusion that it is automatically more important than whatever else you were working on. Those urgent tasks add to the list of things we want to get done and they get in the way of us doing meaningful work.

Multitasking and checking things off a list gives us a shot of dopamine that

provides a sense of accomplishment; however, the result is that we feel busy, yet not very productive. It's like eating a candy bar that gives you a rush of sugar, only to make you crash later. On the other hand, the most important and meaningful work usually does not come with deadlines. Think about learning something new, training a team member, exercising, reorganizing, improving processes or scheduling preventative maintenance. These things can be critical, yet too often we tell ourselves we will get to those things when we have time, once we've done all the other things on our to-do list because we are not pressed by a looming deadline.

As industry leaders deal with an influx of customers wanting to do events again and struggle to hire fast enough to keep up with demand,



I HAVE FOUND THAT IT CAN BE EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE 'URGENT' AND THE 'IMPORTANT.' **THE FACT THAT SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE DONE RIGHT AWAY PRESENTS THE ILLUSION THAT IT IS AUTOMATICALLY MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHATEVER ELSE YOU WERE WORKING ON."**

they can get pulled even deeper into the day-to-day operations of the business. Charles Fred, a friend of mine and founder of True Space, has done extensive research on what it takes for companies to move into the middle market, and specifically where owners and CEOs should be spending their time. They asked top leaders to review their calendar from the past three months and identify what percentage of their time they spent in the following 11 categories:

- **Sales support:** Guidance and help acquiring new customers
- **Operations oversight:** Problem solving, measuring and monitoring results
- **Development** of new services or products
- **Marketing support:** Contributions to messaging, lead sourcing
- **Market research:** Investigating and refining the target market
- **Talent development:** Forecasting, selecting and developing people
- **Social/cultural building:** Communication, reinforcement of values
- **Financial management:** Measuring, assessing, decision making
- **Administration:** Legal, security, benefits, compensation
- **Cash management:** Planning, acquisition
- **Oversight:** Spending time with stakeholders and advisors

They found key differences between

how leaders spent their time in the companies that were able to scale, and those that could not breakthrough to the next level. For businesses to grow, the leaders must shift where they spend most of their time. Their primary focus needs to move from operational activities



(problem solving, selling, marketing support) toward business building activities (talent development, cultural reinforcement, product development).

Execution can be easy to hang onto. Many times, it is what leaders know,

or they worry that no one else can do it as well as they can. But if we don't delegate responsibility for the operational activities to someone else, we will never have time to work on the things that will truly make a difference.

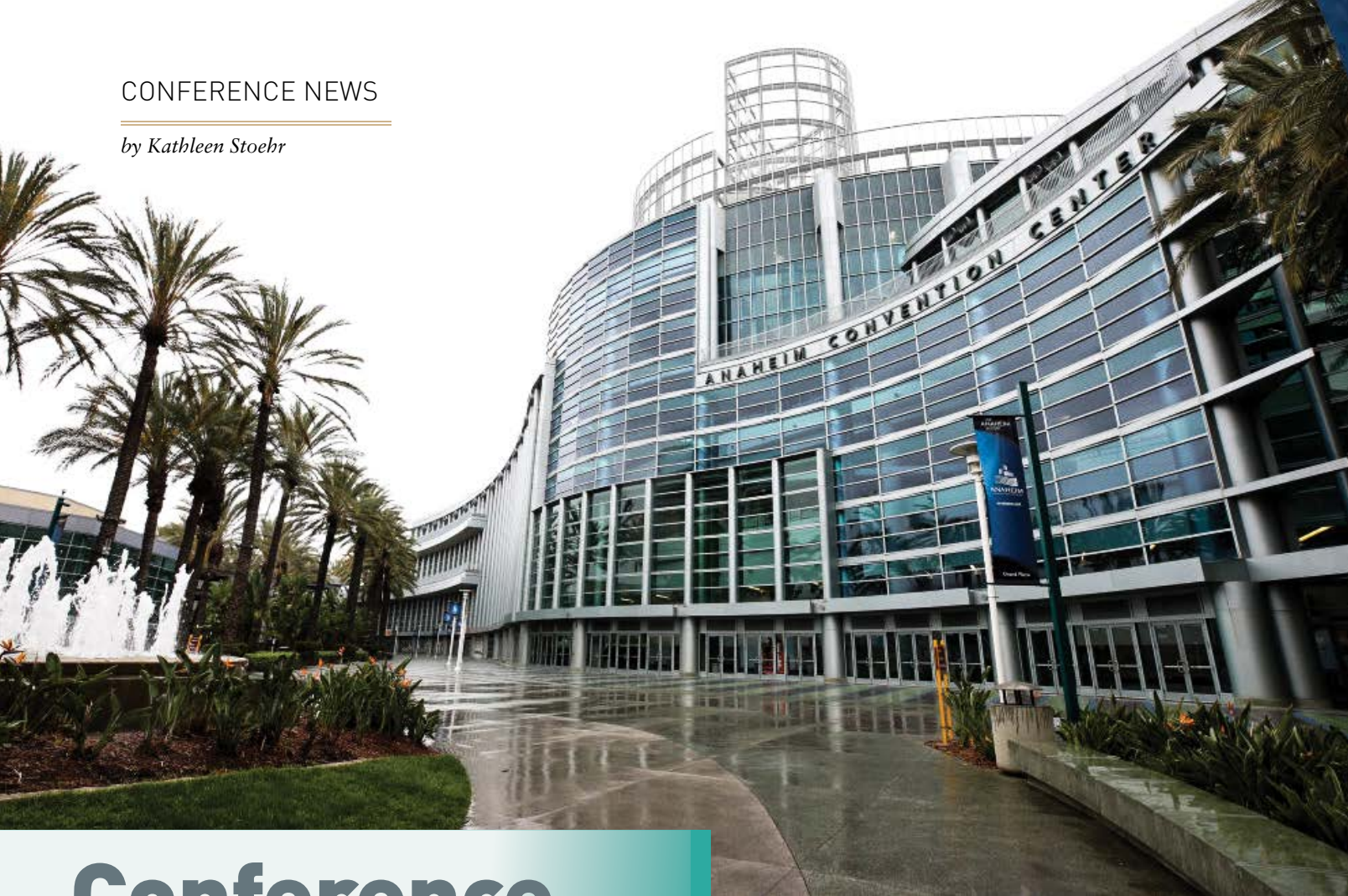
If you're struggling, feeling like you are on an endless hamster wheel, it may be time for you to do the calendar exercise and evaluate how you are spending your time. Are you investing time in activities that will help your business tomorrow, or activities that will allow your business to thrive for many years to come?

There will always be urgent things that pop up, but we must carve out time for the important tasks that don't necessarily come with short-term benefits. The ability to trust that those tasks will make a difference in the long-term will separate the leaders that take their companies to the next level from those who find themselves stuck in the same spot year after year. **CS**



Anthony Lambatos is melding the historic Footers name with new and exciting trends in catering. He grew up in the business, from scraping plates for his dad, founder of Footers Catering Jimmy Lambatos, to hosting his own concession stand at Parade of Homes in high school. He has worked full time for **Footers Catering** since 2004 as Vice President and became Co-owner and CEO at the beginning of 2010. Anthony is passionate about taking the knowledge he has learned from his father and putting a fresh spin on it.

by Kathleen Stoebr



Conference updates

Heading West in 2022

Catersource Celebrates its 30th Anniversary in Anaheim, CA

The closest Catersource has gotten to California in its many years is Las Vegas, NV, but in celebration of its 30th year, well...the time is right to head to the city where magic happens—Anaheim, CA, May 2–5, 2022!

A few wonderful things to report as we build our show:

CALL FOR SPEAKERS: First, the Call for Session Speakers is open until September 30, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Given we have three months less to plan this event than our normal schedule, we will be adhering to that deadline and will begin the vetting process in October. If you would like to be part of the volunteer team that vets sessions for the show, contact kathleen.stoebr@informa.com.

Should you like to propose a session for our event, [click here](#) for Catersource or [click here](#) for The Special Event. We encourage you to take the plunge and share your knowledge with your peers and colleagues!

Catersource has always been built upon the premise of, in the words of founder Michael Roman, “caterers helping caterers” so take a look at your business and strengths and



LEFT: FIRST TIME SPEAKER, **CHEF CHRISTOPHER EVAN TAYLOR**, RECEIVED HIGH MARKS FOR HIS HANDS ON WORKSHOP, GET ON THE LIST...WITH GIFTS!

let us know if there is something you would like to share with your peers.



CHRISTINA MATTEUCCI

ANNOUNCING OUR 2022

KEYNOTE: Next, we are delighted to announce that Ms. Christina Matteucci, Executive Director for David Beahm Experiences, will keynote our Opening General Session. Ms. Matteucci received a standing ovation for her keynote at our Leadership Lunch in 2021 (at the W South Beach), attended primarily by owners and upper-

level executives of some of the most important companies in the hospitality industry. Her message of teambuilding and support resonated incredibly well for our times, her anecdotes so wrapped into the fabric of what it means to be in hospitality...we knew she would be an apt choice to speak to the entire assembly. Mark the date for our Opening General Session: May 4, 2022 at the Anaheim Convention Center.

catersource®
MAY 2-5, 2022 | ANAHEIM, CA

OPEN OF REGISTRATION: Registration, along with our popular "Confidence" rate (that is, you are so confident you will benefit that you are buying the pass without seeing the full conference and tradeshow line up), will open with a soft launch on November 12. Keep up with details at conference.catersource.com.



*The ACE awards are back for 2022!
Submit your top events today!*

ALL OF THE EXTRAS

New in 2022, we will be offering a Catering Tour in addition to the popular Venue Tour offered by The Special Event! Enjoy an afternoon of behind the scenes visits on Monday, May 2 and receive actionable ideas to bring back to your own business. If you are interested in opening your catering kitchens to attendees, please contact jesse.parziale@informa.com.

Our very popular Showcasing Events will return once again on all four nights of the conference, as well as the return of the ACE awards, presented on Thursday evening, May 5. Applications for the ACE awards are now open through (Early Bird) 12/31/2021 and (Late Bird) 1/15/2022. Submit an entry in the ACE/Gala Awards platform [here](#).


As for the event venues, the Catersource + The Special Event team will be in Anaheim toward the end of October to visit spaces and talk to venue owners. If you are interested in having your venue considered for one of our flagship evening events, contact jesse.parziale@informa.com.

IT CAN ALWAYS BE EXPECTED THAT A CATERING KITCHEN TOUR WILL HAVE LOTS OF SNACKS! SHOWN HERE IS ONE OF THE MANY TASTES PROVIDED BY THE **TOPGOLF VENUE IN LAS VEGAS**, 2020.



2022 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Referencing the Leadership Lunch, our pool of candidates is being considered for the Michael Roman Lifetime Achievement Award. We are delighted to note that we will once again offer this incredible luncheon and ceremony in 2022, on May 5. Location TBD.

Join us in Anaheim this May 2–5 to celebrate Catersource's 30th anniversary of bringing industry leaders together! 

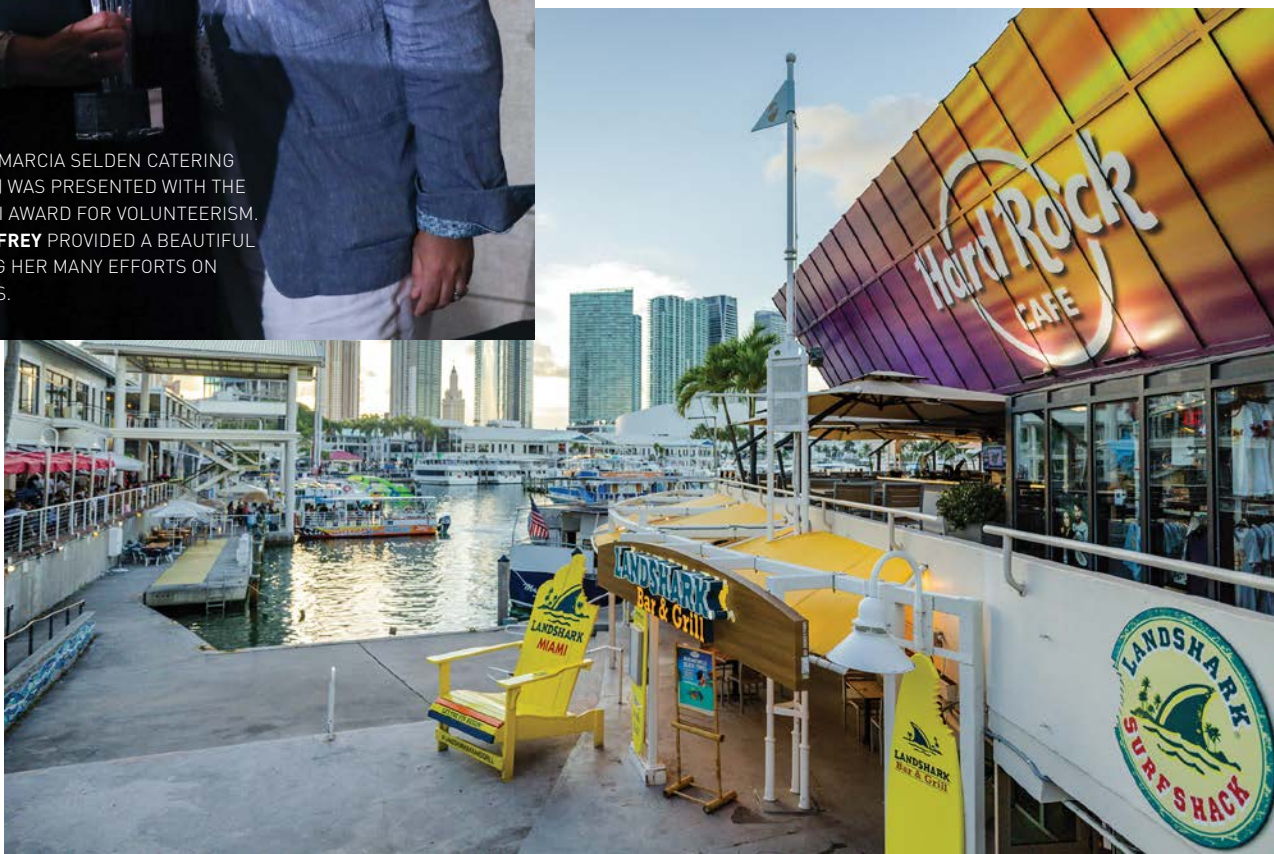


ROBIN SELDEN OF MARCIA SELDEN CATERING AND EVENTS (LEFT) WAS PRESENTED WITH THE RICHARD CARBOTTI AWARD FOR VOLUNTEERISM. HER BROTHER **JEFFREY** PROVIDED A BEAUTIFUL SPEECH OUTLINING HER MANY EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF OTHERS.



ROY PORTER RECEIVED THE 2021 MICHAEL ROMAN LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD. CATERSOURCE EXECUTIVE KATHLEEN STOEHR SPOKE TO THE REASONS WHY PORTER EXEMPLIFIED THE QUALITIES MICHAEL ROMAN WORKED TOWARD, BEFORE PRESENTING HIM HIS TROPHY.

CATERSOURCE + THE SPECIAL EVENT'S FIRST EVENT OF THE WEEK IN 2021, CONNECT LIVE, WAS HELD AT **THE HARD ROCK CAFÉ MIAMI**.





Save the Dates!

catersource® + **THE SPECIAL EVENT®**

MAY 2-5, 2022 | ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER

conference.catersource.com | thespecialeventshow.com



WAS NO

The chef's reducing food

BY AMBER KIS

The past several years have seen great strides from operational changes to reduce food waste—quantifying food donations, composting, and partnering with local organizations. There is another segment that sometimes goes unnoticed in protecting the planet: the chef.

“Most catering organizations are painfully aware of the energies are focused on the operational side. At this point, it is almost too late,” says Los Angeles chef [Name]. “The food in the kitchen is such an important variable.”

That responsibility distills down to three components: recycling.

“I do believe that chefs are stewards of the earth, and we are in a unique position to care for the planet. So, what can you do in your own kitchens?”

ZERO WASTE

*Ground-up mussel shells
as a flavorful ingredient*

STE OT

s role in od waste

SPERT

om the food industry in embracing
ties of food, portion control at buffets,
more local and sustainable farms. But
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e of the food waste challenge, but most
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f Alejandra Schrader. "How we prepare
ble, so chefs have a big responsibility."

onents: precycling, upcycling, and

" says Schrader. "We are caretakers,
anet."

QUICK TIP:

*ells can be used
lient in pastas*

PRECYCLING

Precycling. It's the relationships you cultivate with your produce vendors, or distilleries and breweries in your town.

"We invest so much, so many resources, so many people's time, and so much money growing food, cooking it, and serving it," said Dana Gunders with ReFED, during an early summer 2021 webinar on reducing food waste. "But when we throw food out, all that goes to waste."

ReFED is a national nonprofit working to end food loss and waste across the U.S. food system.

Pay attention to your purchasing

One of the biggest causes of food waste is over-purchasing. While catering companies tend to be wise about sourcing ingredients for their most popular dishes, there may be a tendency to overbuy for dishes that aren't so common in the kitchen.

"You have to be aware of what you're ordering, what's being served, and what's ending up in the trash," Gunders said. "You have to start paying attention to what your customers are telling you they don't want, or what they don't value as these plates come back to the kitchen."

Maximize your ingredients

You can cut down on your waste, as well as the amount of food you must purchase, by exploring how a single ingredient can translate into myriad dishes.

For example, a simple carrot can transition into every course of a meal with a few creative innovations:

- **Hors d'oeuvres.** Creamy Carrot Soup Shooter: a decadent and rich appetizer that embodies the creamy goodness of carrot soup in a single serving shot glass.
- **Side.** Carrot Chips: roasting thinly sliced carrots in olive oil elevates them from a fairly standard veggie into a truly delicious side.
- **Main.** Carrot Hot Dog: a great option for your vegan guests, made with carrots marinated in vinegar and spices.
- **Dessert.** Carrot Cake: a deliciously moist cake with cream cheese frosting, ginger, cinnamon and nuts.

The beauty of imperfect produce

You can be a home for when a farmer has an abundance of lumpy, slightly overripe or bruised tomatoes. He must get rid of them; they're trash to him but to you, you can

process them into a sauce or jam. Grab them for gazpacho or panzanella. Maybe there are peppers that are bruised or have spots from a freeze.

“You have to have compassion for these vegetables because you’re still getting fresh and glorious produce,” culinary nutritionist Lisa Dorfman says. “They were simply dropped from heaven with a twist.”

UPCYCLING

Another way that chefs are innovating their kitchens is by experimenting with upcycling, which essentially translates to utilizing the whole plant.

“I have been motivated to discover creative uses for food and ingredients that usually end up in the trash bin. From peels and seeds to stems, stalks and leaves, I use as much of each plant as possible, and the result has been new flavors with nutritious benefits,” Schrader says. “Chefs are naturally curious and creative, so once they set their mind to cooking with the whole ingredient, they will discover new uses for things that were formerly thrown away, and at the same time, they will enhance the flavor and nutritional value of their creations.”

When cooking with the whole plant, however, it’s important to be aware that one of the biggest challenges is texture. Many of the parts of the plant are very hard or fibrous, which can often lead to the flavor being locked inside. However, when these parts are added to a blender or food processor such as a Vitamix, you can “discover the potential,” Schrader said.

“Chefs are drawn to the challenge of using the whole plant (from root to leaf) or animal (from nose to tail) once they truly grasp the positive impact they can have on the richness and flavor of the food,” she adds.

Upcycling isn’t just reserved for produce either. For example, ground up mussel shells can be used to add flavor to pasta dishes, and stale bread can be repurposed for such dishes as bread puddings, soufflés, and French toast.

“It’s a way to reinvigorate the stale items,” says Jessie Kordosky, chef with General Mills Convenience & Foodservice. “As chefs, we’re all about using products that can work harder for our menus. And since moisture is lost as the baked goods stale, it’s a nice vessel to soak up custard (and other liquids).”

Consider what Chef Keith Lord with Stratəjē Fourteen was able to do: He combined “ugly avocados” with roasted onions and tops, whey from feta, and charred carrot tops and fennel stocks to create “the best dressing ever.”

“We’re saving the world one avocado at a time,” he said.

RECYCLING

The third pillar when reducing food waste in the kitchen is recycling anything remaining.

One way to recycle, which will also have future benefits, is to create a ‘virtuous cycle,’ similar to that of Tredwells out of London. A farmer will collect the restaurant’s food waste for use as mulch, which in turn goes to helping grow fresh produce for the restaurant.

“You can regrow lettuce, regrow ginger,” says Kathleen Stoehr, Director of Community & Content Strategy for Informa Connect. “Set up a small area and save some money on your produce purchases by sticking one of those romaine heads back into the dirt after you chop the leaves off. Why not?”

A similar solution is to recycle your unused produce to provide feed for livestock.

An emerging solution for recycling unused food waste is insect farming. According to ReFED, when insects are mass produced under controlled conditions, they can break down significant quantities of degraded food waste. As insects consume food waste, they produce



GARLIC CHEDDAR BISCUITS AND DELICIOUS CRAB UNITE FOR THE ULTIMATE FLAVOR UNION. SURE TO DELIGHT YOUR GUESTS. PHOTO COURTESY GENERAL MILLS CONVENIENCE & FOODSERVICE



LEFTOVER CINNAMON ROLLS WITH THAI TEA-INSPIRED CUSTARD AND LIM CHEESECAKE SWIRL. PHOTO COURTESY GENERAL MILLS CONVENIENCE & FOODSERVICE

ZERO WASTE QUICK TIP:

Save avocado seeds and make avocado seed powder, which is great for dips, spreads, and sauces.

multiple valuable commodities, such as insect biomass, pharmaceuticals, biofuels, lubricants, and fertilizer from their excrement. Many insect species can also be used as human food or feed for animals. They have the potential to improve food supply and provide a source of protein that is more energy-efficient and has a lower environmental impact.

And who can forget the importance of re-distributing surplus food by partnering with community sharing and food bank programs.

ADVOCACY THROUGH EDUCATION

Implementing a process of precycling, upcycling, and recycling can seem like a lot to take on, and it is, which is why it's small incremental changes that will make all the difference. And fortunately, there are countless resources available to help us move forward.

ReFED for example, has identified a [Roadmap to 2030](#), which looks at the entire food supply chain and identifies seven key action areas showing where the food system must focus its efforts in order to reduce food waste by 50%. The seven action areas are: Optimize the Harvest; Enhance Product Distribution; Refine Product Management; Maximize Product Utilization; Reshape

Consumer Environments; Strengthen Food Rescue; and Recycle Anything Remaining.

Another great resource is the [Chef's Manifesto](#) from SDG2 Advocacy Hub, which outlines a list of eight highly actionable items that food makers can do immediately to build a more sustainable food supply for generations to come. The *Chef's Manifesto* was cultivated from input by more than 100 chefs from 36 countries. One of the eight areas of the *Chef's Manifesto* is Value Natural Resources and Reduce Waste.

"We need to think about the choices we make," Schrader says. "Even small changes—like the balance in our diet between meat and plants or even how we shop and store our food—can make a substantial difference in our ecological footprint."

FARM TO KITCHEN TO TABLE

By paying attention to what they're ordering, and what's going unused, not only will chefs be contributing to the health of the earth, but they will also be improving their bottom lines.

"When you throw away food, you're quite literally putting money in the garbage," said Chef Jennifer Hill Booker, with Your Resident Gourmet out of Atlanta, during the ReFED webinar. "There's such a slim margin of revenue that if you're throwing away your revenue and your profit, your business will eventually fold."

As we continue to navigate the climate crisis through the lens of the food industry, it's imperative that we look at it from multiple perspectives—from farm to kitchen to table.

"We can decide—or influence—what farming practices we are supporting. We can prepare foods in ways that utilize every part of every ingredient, minimizing waste as much as possible. And we can show others through the food we serve that they can try to emulate our approach at home," Schrader said. "Chefs are leaders. They are in the vanguard. What we do, others will do, too. We have the power to change diets and the ways people think about food."



LEFTOVER CROISSANTS CAN BE REPURPOSED FOR A BREAD PUDDING RECIPE. PHOTO COURTESY GENERAL MILLS CONVENIENCE & FOODSERVICE

* WASTE NOT

Purple Sweet Potato Gnocchi



THIS GNOCCHI IS LIGHT BUT FILLING AND PERFECTLY BALANCED BY THE ZERO-WASTE PESTO. © PHOTO COURTESY © KELLEY JORDAN SCHUYLER

Plantain Cups



PLANTAIN PULP IS USED TO CREATE THESE MILDLY SWEET CUPS, WHICH ARE FILLED WITH FLAVOR-PACKED PLANTAIN PEELS THAT ARE HIGH IN DIETARY FIBER. PHOTO COURTESY © KELLEY JORDAN SCHUYLER

Papaya Seed Powder



WANT SOME EASY WAYS TO AVOID FOOD WASTE? SAVE YOUR AVOCADO AND PAPAYA SEEDS. SPRINKLE THESE POWDERS ON MYRIAD DISHES, INCLUDING BREAKFAST, SALADS, AND CASSEROLES. PHOTO COURTESY CHEF ALEJANDRA SCHRADER

ZERO WASTE QUICK TIP:

Save the base of a bell pepper, which is normally trimmed off. They're the perfect size for toasts.

Papaya Seed Powder

Excerpted from *The Low-Carbon Cookbook & Action Plan* reprinted by permission of DK, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. Copyright © 2021 Alejandra Schrader.

YIELD: 2-4 TABLESPOONS

INGREDIENTS

Seeds from 1 papaya

Quick tip: A medium papaya yields about a ½ cup of seeds.

METHOD

1. Use a mesh strainer to wash the papaya seeds thoroughly. Pat dry with a clean towel.
2. Place the seeds on a layer of absorbent paper on a small tray. Separate the seeds to prevent them from sticking together.
3. Place the tray in a sunny spot in your kitchen. Allow to sun-dry until the outer membranes have dried and are no longer sticky, about two to three days.
4. Use a high-performance blender to process the seeds on high until finely ground. Transfer to a spice jar or a metal tin and store in a cool, dry place.

Plantain Cups

Excerpted from *The Low-Carbon Cookbook & Action Plan* reprinted by permission of DK, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. Copyright © 2021 Alejandra Schrader.

YIELD: 6-8 CUPS

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ea. large, very ripe plantains
- 2½ qt (2½ L) water
- ¾ tsp coarse sea salt, divided, plus more
- 1 to 2 tsp melted coconut oil
- 1 ea. medium vine-ripened tomato
- 1 ea. garlic clove
- 1 T avocado oil
- ½ cup thinly julienned brown onions
- ¼ cup thinly julienned red bell peppers
- ¼ tsp ancho chili powder
- ¼ tsp ground turmeric
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper, chopped
- fresh herbs or microgreens
- Cashew cream (process cashews in a high-performance blender with lemon juice, water, yeast and salt)

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C). Remove the tips from the plantains and cut them into two even pieces, leaving the skin on.
2. In a medium saucepan on the stovetop over medium-high heat, bring the water to a boil. Add the

plantains and cook until soft, about six to eight minutes. Transfer to a plate to rest for five minutes.

3. Peel the plantains and reserve the peels. In a blender, combine the peeled plantains and ¼ teaspoon of salt. Pulse until fully mashed. If the mixture is too dry, add water ½ tablespoon at a time until softer.
4. Divide the mash into six to eight evenly sized balls. Lightly brush a muffin tray with the coconut oil. Place the balls in the tray and press down with damp fingers to form cups about 1 inch high and ¼-inch thick.
5. Place the tray on the top rack in the oven and bake until golden brown and the top edges are crispy, about 10 to 12 minutes. Remove the tray from oven and allow the cups to cool completely.
6. In a blender, combine the tomato and garlic. Process on high until smooth. Set aside.
7. Use the edge of a knife to lightly scrape the interior of the plantain peels to remove the cream-colored membrane. Finely julienne the peels to create shreds about ¼-inch (3 mm) thick.
8. In a sauté pan on the stovetop, heat the avocado oil over medium-high heat. Add the onions and sauté for one to two minutes. Add the bell peppers and plantain peels. Sauté for 1 minute more.
9. Add the ancho chili powder, turmeric, black pepper and the remaining ½ teaspoon of salt. Stir until the spices have evenly coated all the ingredients. Stir in the tomato purée and reduce the heat to low. Cover and simmer for at least five minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning.
10. Fill the plantain cups evenly with the shredded peel mixture. Top with cashew cream and fresh herbs or microgreens before serving.

Purple Sweet Potato Gnocchi

Excerpted from *The Low-Carbon Cookbook & Action Plan* reprinted by permission of DK, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. Copyright © 2021 Alejandra Schrader.

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS


INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb (450 g) purple sweet potatoes
- 1 tsp, plus 1½ T pure olive oil, divided
- ½ cup whole-wheat flour, plus more
- ½ tsp coarse sea salt
- 1 tsp nutritional yeast
- ¼ to ½ tsp red pepper flakes

INGREDIENTS FOR PESTO

- 2½ to 3 parts (2½ to 3 L) water
- 1½ cups carrot tops, thick stems removed
- ¼ cup, plus 1 T crushed raw walnuts
- 2 ea. garlic cloves, roughly chopped
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2½ T freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1½ T nutritional yeast
- ½ tsp coarse sea salt
- ½ tsp ground black pepper

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 375° F (190° C). Line a large baking tray with parchment paper.
2. To make the pesto, in a medium saucepan on the stovetop over medium-high heat, bring the water to a boil. Add the carrot tops and blanch for about three minutes. Use a mesh ladle to transfer to a bowl with iced water. Strain and set aside. (Retain the warm water in the saucepan. Turn off the heat but keep the saucepan covered.)
3. In a high-performance blender, combine the carrot tops, walnuts, garlic, olive oil, lemon juice, nutritional yeast, salt and pepper. Process on high until thick and consistent. Set aside.
4. Cut the purple sweet potatoes in half lengthwise. Rub with 1 teaspoon of olive oil. Place the potatoes cut side down on the tray. Place the tray on the top rack in the oven and bake until fork-tender, about 30 to 35 minutes. Remove the tray from the oven and allow the potatoes to cool completely.
5. Remove the skins from the potatoes and transfer the flesh to a blender. Pulse until puréed (don't overprocess) and transfer to a large bowl. Add the flour, salt, and the remaining 1½ tablespoons of olive oil. Knead with clean hands. You might need to add flour a little at a time until the dough reaches the right consistency. Form the dough into a ball.
6. Transfer to a floured surface. Divide into four more portions and roll each into a ¾-inch-thick rope. Cut the ropes into ½-inch pieces.
7. Uncover the saucepan and set the heat to medium. Bring the water to a rolling boil. Add the dough and cook uncovered until the pieces float to the surface, about two to three minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the gnocchi to a platter in a single layer, making sure they don't stick together.
8. Spoon two to three tablespoons of pesto into a shallow bowl. Place the gnocchi on the pesto and sprinkle the nutritional yeast and red pepper flakes over the top. Garnish with small carrot top leaves before serving. 



Get a Head Start on Your Holiday Sales Strategy

While many of us are still enduring the remaining weeks of summer heat, it's time to turn our attention to the holiday season. It might feel strange to start thinking about Thanksgiving spreads and Christmas parties while the sun is still beating down on us, but the tumultuous year we've experienced calls for a proactive sales approach to navigate the holiday season successfully.

As the market begins to think ahead to cooler months and celebratory gatherings, it's time for catering companies and restaurants to prepare for the months ahead.

With the COVID situation constantly changing and evolving, it's up to event pros to provide clients with the comfort and assurance they need while planning in uncertain times. As you prepare for the busy season ahead, keep these sales tips close to build trust with your clients and help them host their long overdue celebrations.

Be mindful of labor needs.

The labor shortage in the industry is showing no signs of easing up, so be prepared to operate with a smaller crew than usual during this year's holiday season. You may need to adjust your strategy throughout the season, like increasing overtime

pay, scaling back on menu options, or reducing the overall number of events your company takes on. None of these options are ideal, of course, but sustainability in the industry requires a fair amount of flexibility to stay on-track. Keep a close eye on your team's workload and manage it as needed.

Take custom menus off the table.

It might be a hard pill to swallow, but custom menus will likely stretch your team too thin this year. Instead, offer holiday collections (packages) that allow clients to select from several pre-selected dishes to build their menus. These will help you to manage labor and food costs, as it is faster to make hundreds of one item rather than smaller amounts of several items. The sales team will also be more efficient, as they can work through the menu collections

“IT MIGHT BE A HARD PILL TO SWALLOW, BUT CUSTOM MENUS WILL LIKELY STRETCH YOUR TEAM TOO THIN THIS YEAR. INSTEAD, **OFFER HOLIDAY COLLECTIONS (PACKAGES)** THAT ALLOW CLIENTS TO SELECT FROM SEVERAL PRE-SELECTED DISHES TO BUILD THEIR MENUS.”

and get to closing the sale more quickly. Additionally, food costs will be lower as you can purchase ingredients in bulk to source for multiple events at once.

Sell your safety measures.

With new variants causing concern, many people are hesitant about planning events over the holiday season for fear of risky conditions. More than ever, they will be evaluating their potential event vendors for health and safety measures. Demonstrate your commitment to safety and sanitation by remaining masked and offering hand sanitizer between tasting courses. Explain the guidelines implemented in your business to reduce risk of viral spread, like sanitizing surfaces after every use, creating socially-distant floorplans, and always wearing PPE in the kitchen.


Keep it positive.

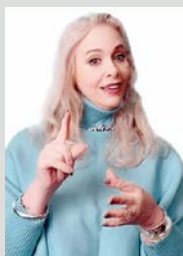
It's important to recognize that it is a tough time for our clients. The holidays are supposed to be a time of joy and celebration. Many missed out on the festivities last year and are eager to gather with their friends and family this year. But there's still a certain level of fear and discomfort that we need to address. Always keep a smile on your face and discuss your plans from a place of positivity. When they bring up questions and



concerns, respond confidently to assuage their worries and assure them that you have it covered. Make sure they know you have their back.

Once again, this year will be unlike any other! Fortunately, the industry

is filled with creatives that are adaptable. We know how to pivot at a moment's notice as many of us experienced in 2020, so focus on remaining flexible and agile this holiday season and you can't go wrong. 



With 30 years of experience owning event planning, high-end catering, and design and décor companies, **Meryl Snow** is on a mission to help businesses get on their own path to success. As a Senior Consultant for **Certified Catering Consultants** and a **Senior Consultant & Sales Trainer** for **SnowStorm Solutions**, Meryl travels throughout North America training clients in the areas of sales, marketing, design, and branding. As a valued member of the **Wedding Industry Speakers**, she speaks with groups from the heart with warmth and knowledge, and covers the funny side of life and business.



Declaring a New Future

Leaders have a quality that brings forward a sense of possibility for the future and a commitment to act on behalf of that future.

Entrepreneurial hospitality leaders have an enormous opportunity in front of them right now. Do you see it? There is a new world, with new possibilities to create a life, leadership, team, and organization that can honor the past but also create a new, desired future. We can create organizations that are more profitable, that can grow and scale how we choose. We can develop organizations and leadership which create value, satisfaction, and meaning for ourselves, our employees, and our customers. But... can you envision it?

There are hospitality organizations that are finding great new people, right now. There are new entrepreneurs emerging and starting new and exciting hospitality businesses. The great employee migration is generating new leaders that want creative and challenging careers revolving around events, food, and service. Are you ready?

Here's the thing that is going to either begin to propel you forward or hold you back: It will be your personal desire and commitment that will take your leadership to the next level.

What is leadership?

We can start talking about what it is, but we often miss the point. Let's begin with describing a few things that leadership is not. It is not having a title. There are many people with titles that are not regarded as good leaders. It is not having power, authority, or ownership. We've seen many people with authority who do not produce results that matter or have true followers.

So, I ask again: what is leadership? In my opinion, leaders have a quality that brings forward a sense of possibility for the future and a commitment to act on behalf of that future, generating desired results.

If that's what it is, how do we develop leaders or take our own leadership to that level? It is clearly a path of learning. Many people do what our culture has taught us to do;

[illegible]

ACE *Gala*

A W A R D S

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SPECIAL EVENTS

we get new concepts. We read books. Maybe we take a course.

In generative leadership, we say that leadership is a performance art. It's a professional team sport. It's not a domain of scholarship. Just like you can't hit a perfect golf shot after watching a video, taking a class or watching a webinar about leadership does not make you a good leader. Being promoted to a new role does not make you a good leader. Owning a company does not make you a good leader, especially for a new future.

Leadership is created by taking your learning into a new domain and a new level of practice. Let's explore four key new domains to start you on your leadership journey.

#1 A new lens

"We see the world, not as it is, but as we are, or, as we are conditioned to see it."

This quote from Steven Covey is powerful because the world we see continues to offer us limited possibilities to take our leadership to the next level. Limited possibilities give us limited choice, resulting in limited actions that we can take.

The best predictor of future behavior, without significant change, is past behavior.

The new future that we want to discover and create will require current and emerging leaders to see with "new eyes" and through a "new lens." What can these leaders create? A future with unlimited

possibilities, which they design with value, satisfaction, and meaning for ourselves, our teams, and our customers.

#2 New language & conversations

The world that you find yourself in was created by you, through language and conversation. Language and conversation do not just describe; it also creates. In fact, human beings are always in conversation—with ourselves and with others. We cannot—not—be in conversation. Much of our conversations are stories we have created that do not allow us to see other possibilities or get the results that we say we want. Taking your leadership to the next level must involve learning to have new and missing conversations that produce action and results.

#3 Moods & emotions

Human beings are constantly in an emotional state. Emotions cause moods. We cannot—not—be in emotion. Additionally, mood is the number one predictor of the results of

“THERE IS A NEW WORLD, WITH NEW POSSIBILITIES TO CREATE A LIFE, LEADERSHIP, TEAM, AND ORGANIZATION THAT CAN HONOR THE PAST BUT ALSO CREATE A NEW, DESIRED FUTURE.”


a desired outcome. Try to make a sale when you are in a very sour mood. What are your chances? As leaders, we can learn to observe, understand, and effectively change our moods and emotions to have more possibility in the results we want.

#4 Choice

Human beings always have choice. We cannot—not—be in choice. Here's the cool thing. We only ever have four choices in life and leadership. When we desire change or improvement we can:

1. Choose to be resigned or resentful and leave the situation, organization, relationship.
2. Choose to be happy with the way things are.
3. Choose to be dissatisfied and be a victim.
4. Choose to continuously communicate and lead toward the positive change you say you want.

Are you desirous of taking your organization's leadership to the next level? Do you want to discover and generate a new future with new possibilities, choices, actions, and results? Do you see opportunity or struggle?

You have a choice. Which path will you choose? Which leader will you be? Choose your future and love your choice. 



Greg Karl is founder of StepChangeLeader, a generative business advisory, leadership & organizational development firm. Step Change Leader helps owners and teams discover and generate a future that provides value, satisfaction and meaning. He is also on the Certified Catering Consultants team.

Greg can be reached at greg.karl@certifiedcateringconsultants.com

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By Amber Kispert

He's Not Jerking You Around

Catering CC's Chef
Winston Williams put
his "Floribbean"
cuisine on display

CHEF WINSTON WILLIAMS SERVED HIS SIGNATURE MINI **JERK IN A CUP** HORS D'OEUVRE AT THE EVENT EXPERIENCE DURING CATERSOURCE + THE SPECIAL EVENT. Photo courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos



LEFT: CHEF WINSTON WILLIAMS IS THE OWNER AND EXECUTIVE CHEF WITH CATERING CC IN BOYNTON BEACH, FLORIDA. Photo courtesy of the chef

A culinary enthusiast with a wild passion and pursuit of perfection as it relates to all things edible, Chef Winston Williams has not only raised the bar for Caribbean haute cuisine but has also created a heightened awareness for “Floribbean” cuisine, which marries Asian and Caribbean cooking methods with exotic spices and fresh Floridian ingredients.

“When people ask me what my specialty is, I always have trouble with that question at first because as a caterer we do it all,” Chef Williams says. “But I guess [my specialty] would have to be classical cuisine with a Caribbean twist.”

From his show stopping, Keylime Broiled Grouper with a Coconut Mojito Sauce to the very popular Floribbean Beef Skillet Roast, and his very innovative signature Carambola Vinaigrette, Williams lent his exceptional knowledge via a session at Catersource, but he also served up a delicious “Jerk in a Cup” bite during The Event Experience held at Miami’s Jungle Island.


A true Caribbean chef

A native from the U.S. Virgin Islands, Williams first realized his passion for cooking while helping his mother and grandmother prepare generational family recipes. His education began in his mother’s kitchen. From there, Williams quickly became an aggressor in the culinary world from high school on. He managed to hold down a full time rigorous high school schedule, all

while working full time at a 5-star 4-diamond resort on the island that included five unique concepts, all in which he was an intricate key player. After making his way through this venue, Williams decided to feed his hunger and drive by broadening his horizon outside of the island, with hopes of returning to claim his rightfully earned title as executive chef. The result of this decision landed him at Florida Culinary Institute in 1990. Once he graduated, however, fate took him on a different path as he worked his way through some of the most prestigious country clubs and resorts in Palm Beach. During the summer Williams traveled to New England as an assistant chef to further his already well-defined future and add to his culinary resume. In 1999 he decided to take a leap into entrepreneurship and become a culinary problem solver.

Chef Williams’ newest endeavor is his Intimate Floribbean Café, which is a speakeasy-style pop-up experience as part of his personal chef services.

“It’s a Chef Winston experience where I bring in my culture,” he says, “and whatever else Chef Winston brings to the table.”

Here are two of chef’s Floribbean inspired dishes to transport you to the islands. Bon Appetit! 

FLORIBBEAN GRILLED MAHI-MAHI ESCOVITCH

YIELD: 2

Of Spanish origin, this is a dish of poached or fried fish marinated in an acidic spicy mixture before serving. The acid in the marinade is usually vinegar but can also include citrus juices. Escovitch is the Caribbean name for this dish.

INGREDIENTS FOR FISH

- 2 ea. 6-ounce Mahi-Mahi or Grouper fillets (each ½ to 1 inch thick)
- 4 T olive oil
- Salt, to taste
- Paprika, to taste
- Cumin, to taste
- 1 T finely grated lime peel

METHOD

1. Pre-heat grill, and arrange fish on large piece of waxed paper or platter
2. Rub fish with olive oil and sprinkle with salt, paprika, cumin, and lime peel
3. Place on hot grill, cook all the way

through or finish in oven, do not overcook.

4. Place in shallow bowl.

INGREDIENTS: ESCOVITCH MARINADE

- 1 ea. medium yellow onion (Spanish), thinly sliced
- 1 ea. medium carrot, thinly sliced or julienne
- ½ ea. red bell pepper, julienne
- 1 ea. medium scotch bonnet pepper (Chile), sliced
- ½ cup grapefruit juice
- ⅓ cup orange juice
- ⅓ cup lime juice
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 1 T honey
- 3 T olive oil
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- 15-20 leaves fresh cilantro, torn or rough chopped

METHOD

1. Bring first 9 ingredients to boil in large saucepan.
2. Reduce heat to medium-low,

simmer uncovered until carrots are crisp-tender, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes.

3. Remove from heat and stir in oil and cilantro, season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Pour marinade over fish, Let marinate at room temperature at least 1 hour and up to 2 hours.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

1. Squeeze fresh lime juice over fish and serve with avocado and mango slices, joined with seasoned peas & rice with sweet plantains and Johnny Cake.

OF SPANISH ORIGIN, ESCOVITCH IS A DISH OF POACHED OR FRIED FISH THAT IS MARINATED IN AN ACIDIC SPICY MIXTURE BEFORE SERVING.

Photo courtesy of the chef





JERK CHICKEN IS ONE OF CHEF WINSTON WILLIAMS' SIGNATURE FLORIBBEAN DISHES.
Photo courtesy of the chef

TAMARIND JERK CHICKEN

YIELD: 4

INGREDIENTS

5 lbs bone-in, skin-on thighs
8 ea. scallions, both white and green
2 ea. shallots, peeled and halved
6 ea. Scotch bonnet chili peppers, stems removed
2 T fresh ginger, peeled and coarsely chopped
6 garlic cloves, peeled
¼ cup fresh thyme leaves, (1 T dried)
3 T ground allspice
1 cup whole allspice berries
2 T soy sauce
2 T dark brown sugar
Salt and black pepper
½ cup vegetable oil
1 T apple cider vinegar
2 T tamarind paste

METHOD

1. Heat charcoal grill to 300° degrees

2. Pat chicken dry with paper towels.
3. Combine all ingredients in a blender, except chicken.
4. Rub combined ingredients into chicken, including under the skin. Refrigerate 12 to 36 hours. Bring to room temperature before cooking and lightly sprinkle with more salt.
5. For best results, coals in the grill should be at least 12 inches away from chicken. If necessary, push coals to one side of grill to create indirect heat.
6. Add 1 cup of soaked whole allspice berries and wood chips to grill.
7. Place chicken on grate, skin side up, and cover.
8. Let cook undisturbed for 30 to 35 minutes.
9. Uncover grill.
10. Jerk chicken is done when internal thermometer registers 165° degrees and skin is dark brown and chicken juices are completely clear.

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Call for Speakers is now open for both Catersource Conference & Tradeshow and The Special Event, which will be co-located in Anaheim, CA May 2–5, 2022. Go to conference.catersource.com for conference information, or <https://cs2022.catersource-cfp.com/> to pitch a session topic.

By Amber Kispert

A EUPHORIC NIGHT IN MIAMI

The Opening Night Party, held at The Fillmore Miami Beach, offered an immersion into the senses of sight and sound.

Euphoria (n.): a state of intense happiness and self-confidence.

Sounds about right doesn't it, as we are able to gather again and start the road back to "normal?"


The feelings during Catersource + The Special Event's Opening Night Party, held at The Fillmore Miami Beach, could definitely be described as euphoric as industry peers united for an evening of high energy, fresh entertainment, and an ambiance unlike any other.

A long and bright history

The story of The Fillmore Miami Beach at the Jackie Gleason Theater began in 1950, when Golden Era legends graced the stage of The Miami Beach Municipal Auditorium. Guests came from around the world to watch such shows as song and dance performances, comedy or even the occasional boxing match.

YOU CAN NEVER GO WRONG WITH LIVE ENTERTAINMENT, AND THE FILLMORE OFFERS A FULL-SERVICE EVENT PRODUCTION TEAM THAT WILL SET YOU UP FOR SUCCESS WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART LIGHTING, A/V EQUIPMENT AND SOUND.

Fast forward to 2007 when the theater was reborn, undergoing a multi-million dollar transformation. Today, The Fillmore is run by Live Nation.

The Fillmore's 41,000 square feet of event space can accommodate events big or small (the total indoor space can accommodate up to 3,000 people, whereas seated banquets can be as small as 50), and it also offers a robust stage presence with audio equipment and visual lighting. During the Opening Night Party, surrounded by rich lighting, lush foliage, and colorful bursts of floral accents, guests were immersed in celebration while their taste buds were intensified via succulent culinary eats and signature cocktails. 

All photos courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos unless otherwise noted



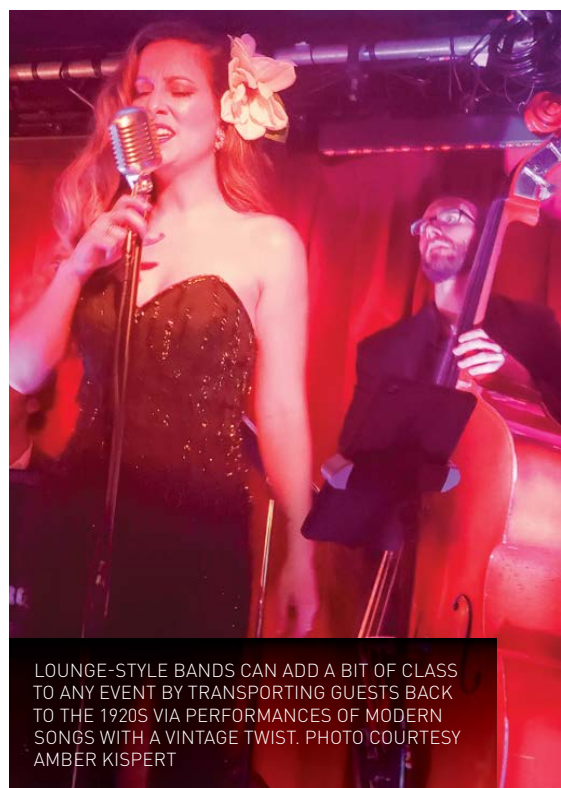
SMALL BITES ARE A WINNER AT ANY EVENT DUE TO THEIR TOTABLE CONVENIENCE.



CIRCUS PERFORMERS WILL ENTERTAIN AUDIENCES WITH THEIR SPECTACLE.



EUPHORIA WAS THE EVENING'S THEME DURING THE OPENING NIGHT PARTY AT THE FILLMORE MIAMI BEACH.



LOUNGE-STYLE BANDS CAN ADD A BIT OF CLASS TO ANY EVENT BY TRANSPORTING GUESTS BACK TO THE 1920S VIA PERFORMANCES OF MODERN SONGS WITH A VINTAGE TWIST. PHOTO COURTESY AMBER KISPERT

EVENT SOLUTIONS, CONT.



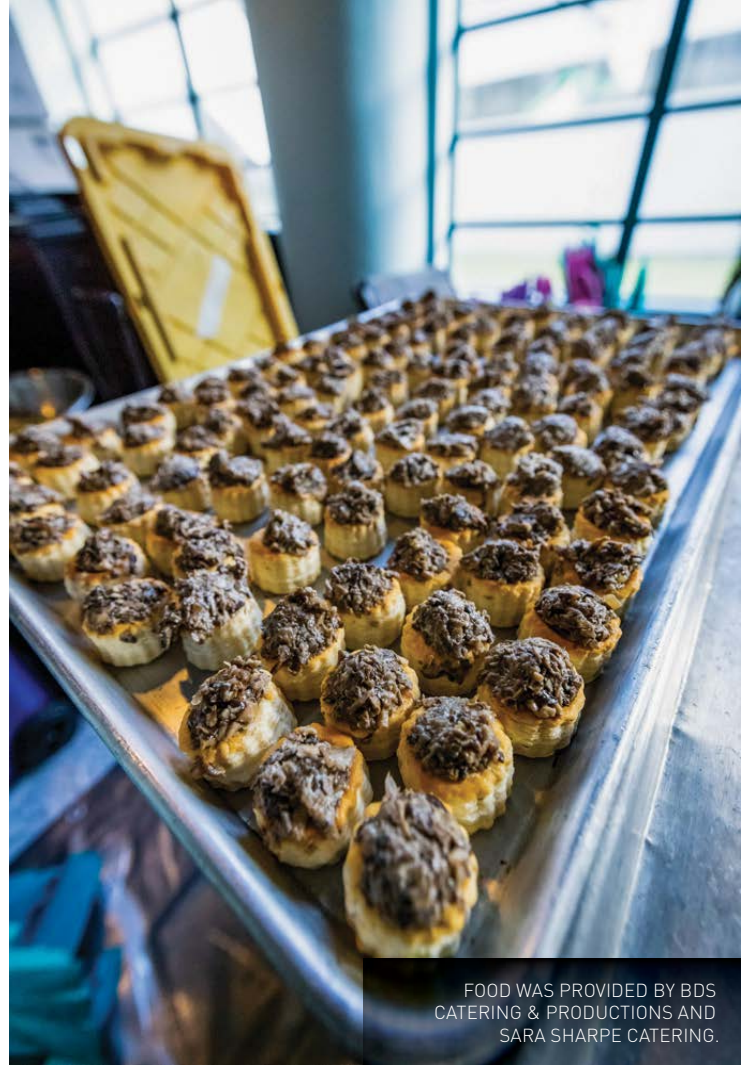
ICE SCULPTURES, LIKE THIS ONE FROM THE ICE BUTCHER, CAN BE A CONVENIENT SERVING STATION FOR BEVERAGES, SUCH AS THESE SIPS FROM BODVÅR - HOUSE OF ROSÉS.



STUNNING LIVING ART, SUCH AS THESE CREATIONS FROM LIVING WORLD ENTERTAINMENT (KEY ARTIST GROUP), INSTANTLY GIVES GUESTS A "WOW" REACTION. TURN TO PAGE 8 IN SPECIAL EVENTS MAGAZINE FOR ADDITIONAL IDEAS OF HOW TO INCORPORATE.



A TUNNEL OF FOLIAGE PROVIDED BY JEREN TROPICALS, INSTANTLY GIVES A UNIQUE AMBIANCE AND A SENSE OF ANTICIPATION TO ANY EVENT.



FOOD WAS PROVIDED BY BDS CATERING & PRODUCTIONS AND SARA SHARPE CATERING.



COMEDIC ACTS, SUCH AS THESE "ODDITIES" FROM ODD O'S, OFFER A LIGHTEARTED BREAK FROM THE BOISTEROUS SOUNDS OF LIVE MUSIC.



TABLE GAMES, SUCH AS BLACKJACK FROM FUN PLANNERS, ARE A POPULAR ATTRACTION AT EVENTS.

STEAL THIS



Fresh ideas to use or adapt at your next event.

▼ Anticuchos with traditional wood skewer | Chef Aaron Brooks

Photo courtesy True Aussie Beef & Lamb



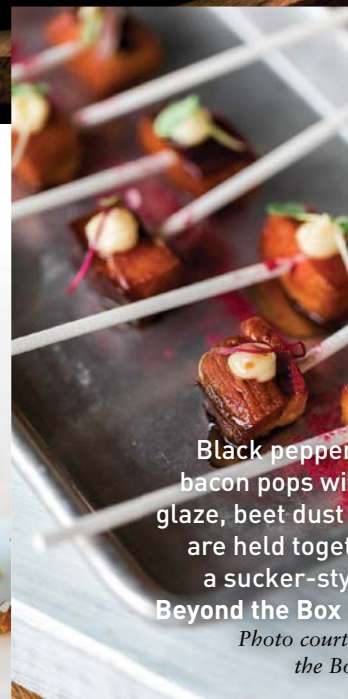
◀ A petite breadstick is a perfect edible skewer, reducing waste | Pinch Food Design

Photo courtesy Pinch Food Design



The grill-softened balsamic onions are held together easily when skewered firmly | The National Onion Association

Photo courtesy National Onion Association



Black pepper bacon pops with beet dust and a sucker-style appetizer are held together by a sucker-style appetizer | Beyond the Box

Photo courtesy the Bo

PICKS AND STICKS

Picks. Sticks. Skewers. Swords. Not only are the options endless, but so are the opportunities. Whether it's grabbing a small bite off a tray as it whizzes past, or a beautifully plated entrée, this mode of serving can cutdown on utensil use while also giving guests all their accompaniments in one easy bite. Here are some creative kababs to bring to your next event.

—Amber Kispert

▲ Beet salad on a bamboo skewer | Salty Canary

Photo courtesy National Honey Board

► A sturdy metal skewer can hold a lot of weight | Catering by Michaels

Photo courtesy Catering by Michaels





◀ Bite sized salad on a wood fork | **Best Impressions Caterers**

Photo courtesy Best Impressions Caterers



Beef and veal mango barbecue meatballs on forks | Catering CC
Photo courtesy Chef Winston Williams



▲ Tiny PB& J skewer on Breakfast Crush "Martini" | **Natalie Migliarini, Beautiful Booze**

Photo courtesy National Peanut Board



Salted Tamarind Margarita Pop on a popsicle stick | Toni Roberts, The Ritz Carlton Chicago

Photo courtesy Toni Roberts



▲ Crispy chicken bite with biscuit | **Bill Hansen Catering & Events**

Photo courtesy Instawork



AS SEEN IN MIAMI



Art Menchaca, catering sales manager for The RK Group, San Antonio, TX hit the step and repeat with style at the opening night party.



Emily Simpson and Debby Stein of Cartewheels Catering, Kerrville, TX share a mother/daughter moment at the opening night event, Euphoria.

July in Miami was a sight to behold during Catersource + The Special Event as a sea of smiling faces could be found around every corner. After over a year apart, friends and colleagues were once again able to come together, whether it was shooting the breeze over a drink during one of the evening Showcasing Events or being inspired together within the Miami Beach Convention Center. Being together has never felt better.

— Amber Kispert & Kathleen Stoehr



Zoe Moore (Grow with Zomo), **Leilani Baugh** (Roux and Vine Catering, Magnolia Street Wine Lounge & Kitchen), **Enjolik Oree-Bailey** (Low Country Quisine), and **Christopher Evan Taylor** (Chris Evans Events and Catering) at Connect Live, the Monday evening event at Hard Rock Café.

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All photos courtesy WTA Photo via SpotMyPhotos unless otherwise noted.



When Jamie met Terrica Quickert (right) was a presented by Terrica Quickert friendship. With the a the three have formed the three were part of Conference Ambassador on the fly and helping Photo courtesy Jamie Quickert



Leigh-Ann Reitze (UPMC Pinnacle), and Teri Jakob (Making the Magic Happen) could be seen scooting around the Miami Beach Convention Center the entire week.



...rica: About three years ago, **Jamie Skaggs** (left). Kaboom! Instant addition of **Fausto Pifferrer** (middle) and an unstoppable team. In 2021, ... of Catersource + The Special Event's ... dor program, answering questions ... attendees have their best show ever.

ckert



SEARCH 100 donors **Frank Puleo** (Framboise Catering, ICAEF Treasurer), **Joann Roth-Oseary** (Someone's in the Kitchen) and **Jaclyn Bernstein** (Empire Force Events) catch up at the annual Wednesday evening SEARCH Foundation event.



Powerhouses **Christina Matteucci** (David Beahm Experiences), **Sandy Hammer** (AllSeated), **Robin Selden** (Marcia Selden Catering), **Jennifer Perna** (Fulton Market Consulting), **Jeffrey Selden** (Marcia Selden Catering) and **Ron Ben-Israel** (Ron Ben-Israel Cakes) attended the Thursday Leadership Lunch at the W. Jeffrey presented the Richard Carbotti Volunteerism award to his sister, Robin; Christina presented a keynote on Leadership with a well-deserved standing ovation at the end... and the rest—well, most definitely arm candy, right?



By Reuben Bell



REUBEN BELL, PRESIDENT
OF BLUE ELEPHANT
EVENTS AND CATERING

Editor's note: At Catersource 2021, **Reuben Bell** called me over to him, saying, "Hey, fellow introvert!"

We always mean to sit down and have a conversation, but—as all introverts are wont to do—we tend to disappear early from gatherings of any great number when at all possible. How we are both able to run big events goes against a lot of what it means to be an introvert; but in my book, running an event is very different than being a guest at one. And Mr. Bell, president of Blue Elephant Events and Catering, along with his partner, Fausto Pfifferer, are some of the best at what they do. Of course, it takes a village, as Reuben explains in his essay. —*Kathleen*

One thing that hit home for us during and following the pandemic was the importance of relying on the professional team we have built to create and execute the safest, most seamless events possible. Pandemic tension is still running high with clients and staff, and despite the progress made in vaccinations across the U.S. and abroad, uncertainty still lingers.

We had a situation recently where a rehearsal dinner for 200+ guests in a historic mill building faced a crisis 10 days out. Lingering fears of COVID transmission and the threat of the Delta variant looming

on the horizon, coupled with the fact that 100% of guests were traveling from out of state, caused the couple anxiety and necessitated a change to an outdoor venue. Instead of creating a frantic race to turn everything around, we were able to calmly contact our team and put a new plan in place within 24 hours with a new outdoor venue on the water. We delivered a guest experience that was as good—if not better—than the original plan.

We value these professional connections more than ever and revel in the solid relationships we have created. Many on the team had good reasons not to be able to make this work, but instead of saying no or automatically offering up excuses, everyone looked at each other and said, "How are we going to make this work?" and made it happen.

After the last 18 months, I have realized that this year (especially) and moving forward, there is no longer any room for ego or posturing in what we do. It sucks up too much energy and negatively affects the outcome. Life is too short, and our clients are relying on our expertise. Let's show them what professionals can do! 