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SPECIAL EVENTS

SPRING 2022

SHOW
ISSUE
2022

SOIREES IN
THE SAND
P. 12

ANNUAL DMC
SPOTLIGHT
P. 50

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Spring is among us!

And with that, warm weather to extend events into outdoor spaces.

By CORT Events



When designing an event that boasts both indoor and outdoor spaces, a smooth transition between the two areas is vital for an uninterrupted guest experience. To create a lively atmosphere that highlights both the open airiness that comes with being outdoors and the more structured canvas of the indoors, having transitional furnishings that can flex between both environments is a must have. Indoor/outdoor options will bring you the style and wow-factor of modern, high-quality, furnishings that are able to withstand the elements.



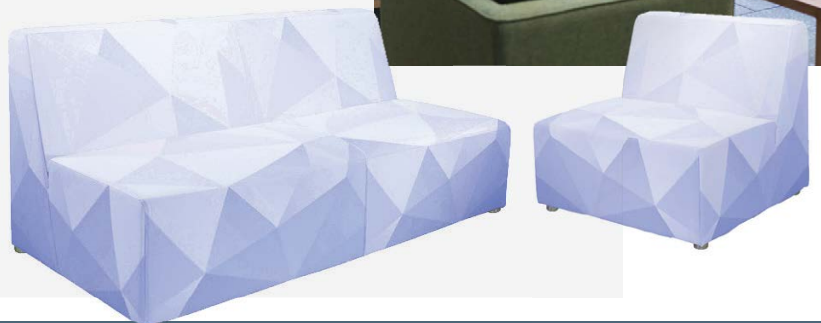
Taking it a step further, consider furnishing your event with personalized pieces. Using the same soft seating product across both indoor and outdoor creates linearity but may be mundane. Personalizing soft seating with custom colors, graphics, or logos allows you to introduce new elements without disruption. The use of the same product in both spaces creates linearity,



2022 Color of the Year - Very Peri:

Bringing the 2022 Color of the Year to life may seem daunting, but it's easier than you may think. Chosen by Pantone as a reminder to "embrace the altered landscape of possibilities, and trust in the possibilities of the future," Very Peri isn't a delicate lavender, and it's not a dark purple. It's a vibrant and exciting color that you can use in large and small ways.

Personalization and décor allows you to bring in new trends, such as Very Peri, in as bold or as subtle of ways to suit your vision. Throw in splashes of periwinkle with rugs and pillows that tie in the color without making it a focus. Or go bold by personalizing the modular Brighton collection, made for both indoors and outdoors, for a look that's versatile, comfortable, and fun.



For more design tips and the latest updates, visit us at cortevents.com.
Attending The Special Event Show + Catersource? **Stop by our booth #603** to say hi!

SPRING 2022 THIS ISSUE



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Catersource + The Special Event is coming to Anaheim this May and will be packed full with inspiration, networking, creativity and fun!

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David Beahm Experiences executive director and Catersource + The Special Event keynote Christina Matteucci shares her experiences and lessons learned as the second-in-command to one of today's top event companies.

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Special Events magazine is delighted to announce the nominees for the 2022 Gala Awards.



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Cincinatti | Pinecroft at Crosley Estate

On the cover: Pinecroft at Crosley Estate's lush gardens, rows of orchards, and a gorgeous Garden pavilion, make this a favorite for everything from weddings to corporate to social events. **Turn to page 78** for more from this beautiful venue. Photo courtesy Tire Swing Photography



EDITOR'S PAGE

IT'S SHOW TIME!

The Show Issue is always my favorite, focusing on the culmination of a year of work—but wrapped into the culture of the city we will all be journeying to. Over the winter months, I found myself playing “California Dreamin’” often; those brown leaves, cold days, and Minnesota gray skies had me yearning to be in SoCal, where nearly 75% of the year’s days offer sunshine and warmth.

We have much to celebrate together; it has been a long and difficult path to get to May 2022. I am so pleased to know that many of you are exceptionally busy, but with that comes difficulties of another kind: finding enough staff, getting your supplies on time, achieving a balanced DE&I culture in your organization, and escalating prices to name a few. Thankfully, our conference and tradeshow has much to assist you in learning and exploring new and positive ways to approach these issues, but also never scrimps on the fun stuff: trends, tastes, and tea (as in the spilling of...).

Wrapped into all of that are our beautiful bookend keynotes, Christina Matteucci and Chef Roy Choi. New Yorker Christina Matteucci on Wednesday morning at 9:00 a.m. is the real deal. She lives and breathes our events industry every day as the masterful executive director for David Beahm Experiences. Her anecdotes and insight for employee motivation will leave you with actionable ideas and, while you may be one of many in the audience, she will connect with you, mind-meld even! You can read more about Christina via our feature on [page 22](#).

Roy Choi, conversely, is SoCal embedded, from his first food trucks (Kogi) parked outside L.A. nightclubs to the neighborhoods he focuses on in his ‘Broken Bread’ television series, now in its second season. I am thrilled that he will kick off our Thursday morning on a high note, and then will be joined onstage by Search Foundation chairwomen, Kate Patay, for a Q&A session.

Also in this issue, we will celebrate the nominees for Special Events Gala awards, give you solid information related to marketing and technology, offer a robust list of Destination Marketing Companies, and then focus on some of the things that come to mind when thinking about California: soirees, sips, and cinema.

It’s a jam-packed issue and I thank you so very much for taking the time to read through our efforts and learn from them as well. Happy spring, and we shall hopefully see you in Anaheim in May!

Kathleen

Kathleen Stoeher
Director of Community & Content Strategy

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OPENING KEYNOTE:

I Know You're the Boss, But...

with

*Christina
Matteucci*

Executive Director of
David Beahm Experiences

Wednesday, May 4 • 9:00 am

Christina Matteucci pioneers an integral role within the special event industry as Number Two to famed event designer David Beahm. During her session, she will address the singular relationship between Number Ones and their teams from both sides of the coin.

Christina will explore how modeling successful partnerships in the workplace sets a precedent for rewarding collaboration in society and bridges generational divides. She will tackle the most pressing queries she receives from hospitality Principals. Her lecture will also address how she advises emerging professionals making the decision to seek employment underneath the umbrella of a larger company or to branch out and begin their own ventures.



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Spring 2022 THIS ISSUE

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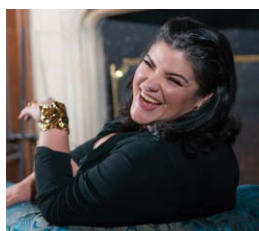
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defines which analytics
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this season



Tech expert **Elizabeth Sheils**
breaks down the
ins and outs of email



Events business
strategist **Michelle Loretta**
prepares you
to make the most out
of your time during
Catersource +
The Special Event



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keynote **Christina Matteucci**
challenges
you to bridge the
generation gap

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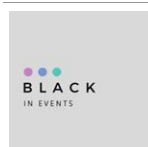
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OUR PARTNERS



a conversation with

Roy Choi

Thursday, May 5 • 9:00 am

Roy is known as one of the architects of the modern food truck movement through Kogi BBQ by merging food and social media with community and honoring the street food culture that laid the path before him.

Join Roy at Catersource + The Special Event 2022 for a spirited conversation around his perspective of food, catering, and events amidst the backdrop of social justice. This is a can't miss opportunity to hear from the groundbreaking chef, author, and television personality.



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CONFETTI

Riyadh 2021

BWS KSA, the Saudi Arabian branch of Balich Wonder Studio, kicked off the 2021 Riyadh season in October with an opening parade that drew 750,000 spectators.

By Amber Kispert

Fireworks accompanied the opening parade for the 2021 Riyadh Season.

Photo courtesy BWS KSA

2

EVERY YEAR, for nearly six months, the capital of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, becomes a festival to rival all others with an extensive calendar of over 1,000 events, including concerts, theater performances, and food, all in celebration of the entire nation. The Riyadh Season, unified under the theme of "Imagine More," kicked off this past October with an opening parade, orchestrated by BWS KSA, the Saudi Arabian branch of Balich Wonder Studio.

This year's spectacular opening parade, enlivened by hundreds of performers, kicked off the long list of the Season's events, and is intended to represent all the main attractions that will take place in the city's different districts. Some of this year's highlights included a "flying" man, 2,760 drones, special water effects, fireworks, and lights. The Riyadh Season is orchestrated by the General Entertainment Authority.

The parade was especially important for the entire world entertainment sector since it was the largest show produced for a live

audience following the long hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event used the latest technologies to guarantee that the show, which was enjoyed by over 750,000 people in-person, could also be enjoyed by the millions of spectators who followed the show via TV, websites, and social networks.

"We are delighted to have been able to continue to give life to this long-running dream. In order to create the opening parade of the new season we were asked to go even further and we followed the official motto 'Imagine More' in doing so. We worked closely with Sela Sport and the General Entertainment Authority to create an event that thanks to a highly memorable show, faithfully represents the grandeur of this new season, one which will be full of surprises and numerous activities presenting the best of local and international excellence" according to BWS-KSA. ●



Riyadh 2021



One of the floats during the parade featured elaborately costumed performers.

Photo courtesy AzizJan Photography

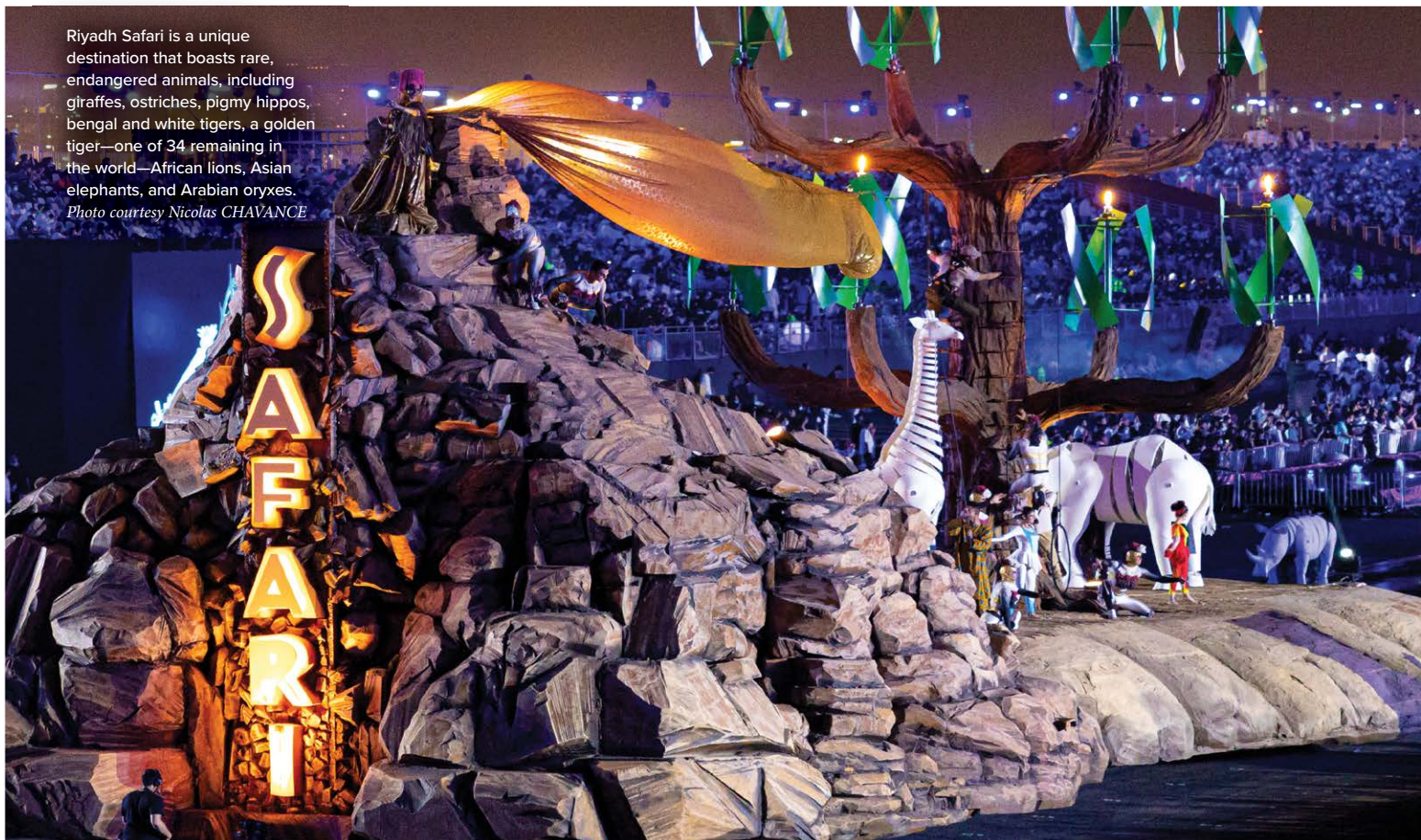


Dancers perform on a hotel-themed float.

Photo courtesy AzizJan Photography

Riyadh Safari is a unique destination that boasts rare, endangered animals, including giraffes, ostriches, pigmy hippos, bengal and white tigers, a golden tiger—one of 34 remaining in the world—African lions, Asian elephants, and Arabian oryxes.

Photo courtesy Nicolas CHAVANCE





Confetti added a bit of drama and sparkle to the parade.
 Photo courtesy AzizJan Photography



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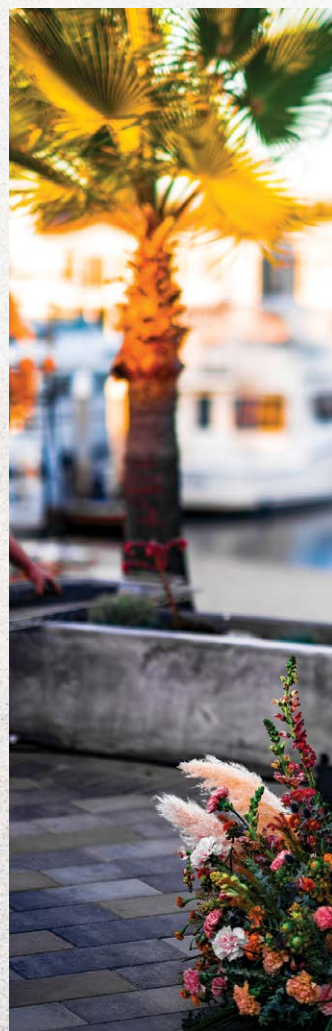
DIVINE DECOR



(Above) A bride's hair is accented with a starfish accessory. *Photo courtesy Mandy Lynn Photography*

(Top right) Lighting is an important element of a beach event as the sun goes down. *Photo courtesy Savanah Loftus Photography*

(Bottom right) 24 Carrots Catering and Events used decorative surfboards to communicate the evening's menu during the Leading Caterers of America Executive Summit in 2018. *Photo courtesy Villa Visuals and 24 Carrots Catering and Events*





Soirees in the SAND

By Amber
Kispert

The sun. The sand. A soundtrack of the wind and waves. There really isn't anything quite like a beach event.

"It's peaceful, it's romantic, it's beautiful and the view is always great," says Jamie Chang with Mango Muse Events (San Francisco area). "When you can get married on the beach or with a beach view, it's extra special because all those great things about the beach become even more amplified."

And the beach isn't just reserved for weddings, however; anniversary or birthday parties, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, and even team building events can all be perfect soirees for the sand.



(Left) Place cards, affixed to seashells offer a unique play on the beach location.

Photo courtesy Mango Muse Events





(Left) Play up the materials of the area through the flatware.

Photo courtesy Anna Kim Photography

Keep it simple

Simple and elegant is the common aesthetic for any event on the beach. Being the beach is already beautiful on its own, you don't want to go overboard on the décor elements because it could detract from the natural features.

"You want elements that complement the setting, not take away from it," Chang says.

Lee Anderson with Sugar Beach Events (Maui) agrees. "While beach weddings do follow the trends, they usually feel lighter," she says, "with colors that echo the surroundings and furniture that further brings in the beachy feel, while keeping it elegant and elevated."

Mother Nature's playground

One of the biggest considerations for beach events is the elements, specifically the wind and heat. Obviously, rain can also be a factor, but planning for this mirrors all other outdoor events, whereas the sun and wind are unique to the beach.

"Since Mother Nature is really in charge, you can count on using your experience and expertise to handle any challenges that may come your way on the wedding day," Anderson says.

When contending with the wind, you may need to think twice about tall and lavish floral arrangements, towering candles, and even ribbons or balloons. Weigh down your lighter items with rocks, seashells or other heavier items; fill vases with sand or water for extra heft; tie programs to

chairs; use adhesive to secure table décor; choose flower varieties that stand up well against high temperatures; and consider electric candles or torches in lieu of standard votive candles.

"How many seat assignments have blown off a table because they were set on pretty folded napkins? Too many to recall," Anderson said, "and don't forget about tray passing champagne flutes; I have spent more money on champagne flutes than anything else in my catering company."

The details

When talking about soirees in the sand, there are a lot of details that instantly say "beach," without going over the top and making them seem cliché.

The color palette

While the traditional color palette for a beach event may be blues, tans, teals and aquas, those don't have to be the only ones. Add a little pop of color that will contrast with the sand to make the setting more vibrant. Think green, orange, or coral tones.

The flora

"The aesthetic starts with greenery, usually something local to the area, and flowers," says Chang. Chrysanthemums, calla lilies, king protea, and orchids all do well on the beach.

The lighting

"Lighting is a big part of beach weddings because once it gets dark, it really gets dark," says Chang. Consider using tiki torches, electric candles, lanterns, woven light shades, string lights or having fireworks.

The extras

"Incorporating ocean or nautical related items are also very common in beach weddings and events," says Chang. Think coral, seashells, knots, boats, surfboards, and sand.

"And of course, let's not forget the ocean



(Clockwise) Not just for messages, vintage bottles make for great decor. *Photo courtesy Villa Visuals and 24 Carrots Catering and Events*

By default, beach events have a laid back and comfortable vibe, so why not play it up with some hammocks.

Photo courtesy Christie Pham Photography

Set up a grill outdoors for delicious barbecue favorites.

Photo courtesy McCune Photography

Corals and teals are common color palettes for events on the beach.

Photo courtesy Mango Muse Events



(Top) Beach events can be just as elegant as their indoor counterparts. *Photo courtesy Anna Kim Photography*

(Above) These tropical fruit parfaits from Sugar Beach Events are perfectly light and refreshing. *Photo courtesy N V Maui Media*

(Above Right) Use colors that accentuate the natural beauty of white sand beaches. *Photo courtesy Sugar Beach Events*

(Right) Miniature cocktail umbrellas can make great place cards. *Photo courtesy Mango Muse Events*



(Top) Keep guests cool and comfortable by providing fans and parasols. Photo courtesy Anna Kim Photography

(Left) Photo guestbooks can be fun additions to a destination event. Photo courtesy N V Maui Media

(Above) Worried about your desserts melting? Why not try cotton candy! Photo courtesy N V Maui Media

itself which typically shows up in color schemes, stationery, linen, and cakes,” Chang says.

But it doesn't have to all be seashells and palm leaves. Consider using other elements such as stones, sea glass, and driftwood.

A few additional details to consider:

- **Entertainment:** Bring in island-themed musicians (drums or ukulele). Or bring it up a notch with an aerialist suspended between palm trees; or employ a fire dancer for evening events.
- **Food:** Opting for finger-foods like sandwiches, vegetables with dips, and sweet or salty snacks will allow guests to socialize and move around.
- **Favors:** Have a little fun with it! Hand out beach pails with sunblock, sunglasses, and a water bottle. Or distribute leis or straw hats for guests to wear.
- **Save the Date:** How about a deflated (but ready to inflate) beach ball with the event details printed on it?
- **Activities:** Don't underestimate the fun and popularity of beach volleyball, bocce ball, and photo booths.

Bring the outdoors inside

Even if you don't have access to the sun and sand, there are still plenty of opportunities to bring the beach indoors.

“It's just a matter of choosing elements that will still work with the venue or location you're in but give it that beach vibe,” says Chang. “For example, just utilizing some tropical leaves or flowers like monstera or orchids can bring that beach vibe to a non-beach event. Or incorporating a lot of blue greens into the design will give it a beach feel no matter where the event is taking place. Or even selecting a certain type of menu and including coconut or mango or ahi tuna or Caribbean flavors would bring a beachy vibe to any event.” ●



(Above) Add some luxury to an event by bringing the indoors outside with comfortable rugs and furniture. *Photo courtesy Lorely Meza*

(Right) Having some VIP guests to your event? Set up some cabanas. *Photo courtesy McCune Photography*

(Above Right) Make use of complementing colors. *Photo courtesy McCune Photography*





California Here We Come

Join us for the sun and sand in Anaheim, CA May 2–5 for Catersource + The Special Event. This year's conference promises to be a spirited gathering of all the people, ideas, and trending innovations shaping the catering and events industry; a focus that will ring especially true this year.

Gathering again gives us the opportunity to connect with friends, taste new cuisine, marvel at the innovations that have come forward and get a much-needed laugh with industry peers.

Visit thespecialeventshow.com for all the details.



Three Ways to Nurture Relationships at The Special Event



As much as Zoom was a rescue for us in the last couple of years, **there is nothing like real face time.**

By Michelle Loretta

I love industry conferences like The Special Event because of the rich learning that I get during my week out of the office. Not only do I find the sessions deeply educational, but also, I value the opportunity to engage with my peers in person. As much as Zoom was a rescue for us in the last couple of years, there is nothing like real face time. Here are three ways that I make sure to nurture relationships while at educational conferences.

1 – SCHEDULE MEETINGS IN ADVANCE

I like to find out who is going to be at the show so that I can make plans to meet up with colleagues. One of the great things about social media is that people broadcast in advance when they'll be attending different conferences and workshops. Take note. I also reach out to friends and check-in with them. I want to earmark time in advance to connect for a quick coffee during a break or a mealtime meetup.

The reason this is so important to do in advance is because when you get to the conference, things can get busy, hectic, and overwhelming. I find that if I wait to set aside time while I'm there, I just don't do it. The introvert in me ends up relishing in cozy time with room service in my hotel room. But that's such a wasted opportunity! Conferences are a unique time to exchange ideas and mastermind with trusted industry friends; and that adds to the investment I'm making to be there.

2 – BE A CONNECTOR

If you've been around for a while, then it's likely you know several savvy event pros. You're in a distinctive position to be a connector. If you're meeting up with a colleague for lunch, invite another industry friend that they'd benefit from knowing. This makes their businesses stronger, and our industry stronger. We all benefit when we bring outstanding teams to our clients' events. It also cements you to both of them in a deeper way.

Another reason that I love this idea of being the connector is that people truly love to feel included and you may just invite someone to lunch that didn't otherwise have any plans. That goodwill comes back to you in spades. Kindness and inclusion go a long way!

3 – FOLLOW UP WITH NEW CONTACTS

When I get back from a conference, I'm usually in a big flurry to catch up on missed work. But I can make the most of my relationship investments by setting some time aside to reach out to new people I met. This is made easier if I've collected business cards. The reality is that we don't always do this in our digital age. This too can be done more strategically. As you listen to people speak, or meet people on the fly, start a list of the people with which you want to keep in contact, or check in with.

Set aside the morning that you get back into your office to circle back with the people on that list. Head to their website and grab their email and/or contact info. Thank speakers for the



education they shared with you (we love that!). Reach out to new contacts letting them know that you enjoyed meeting them. Follow them on social media so that you can keep up with them. Then add a date to your calendar three months later to circle back with that list. See if there is anyone you'd like to continue getting to know. Is anyone on that list a valuable peer to exchange ideas with? Is there anyone on there that you want to do business with?

Before heading to a conference, you want to come up with your own relationship strategy that you'll enact before, during, and after the conference. How will you make the most of not only the learning sessions, but also the time outside of the classroom? How can you keep learning beyond the conference, from industry peers? Put your plan in place and you'll deepen those bonds. ●

Michelle Loretta is a strategist for the events industry and creator of **Be Sage Consulting**, formerly Sage Wedding Pros. She has been educating, coaching, and consulting event professionals since 2009. With



a degree in accounting, roots at the Big 4 firm Deloitte, and experience as a stationery entrepreneur, she dissects numbers to help level-up businesses' earnings. Michelle wakes up each day excited to create **Financial Strategies for Wedding and Event Businesses**. She has been asked to speak at a number of industry conferences, including NACE Experience, Biz Bash Live, and The Special Event.

(Above) Conferences, like Catersource + The Special Event, are great for networking with industry peers—happy hours, dinners, evening events, the opportunities are endless!

(Below) The Catersource + The Special Event team cannot wait to catch up with you in Anaheim, CA. Photos courtesy WTA Photos via SpotMyPhotos.



Why Being Number Two Is *Second to None*

David Beahm Experiences executive director and Catersource
+ The Special Event keynote **Christina Matteucci** shares her
experiences and lessons learned as the second-in-command
to one of today's top event companies.

BY SUE PELLETIER



For some people, being called “Number Two” would not necessarily be super exhilarating. Not **Christina Matteucci**. Also affectionately known as TeucciMama: The Mother Hen of the Number Twos, the Executive Director of David Beahm Experiences, former actor, speaker, and opening keynote for this year’s Catersource + The Special Event, Matteucci thrives in her position as second in command—or as she puts it, “number-one-adjacent”—to the legendary visionary, David Beahm.

We caught up with Matteucci recently to learn more about why she believes being second really makes a person second to none.

Special Events: How did you start out in this wild and wonderful world of catering and special events?

Matteucci: I graduated from the NYU Tisch School of the Arts in May of 2001 ready to be Broadway’s next big thing. Then my grandmother passed away in June, and my 57-year-old father passed away unexpectedly in July. Then 9/11 happened, and I went from having the world by the tail to having that tail spin me around. With my entire world turned upside down, I just didn’t have the emotional capacity to go out for auditions, so I took a thankless retail job and went home every night



(FAR LEFT) Christina Matteucci attributes her success to the hard work of the team. Pictured (left to right): Ryan Zoeller, Christina Matteucci and David Beahm. Photo courtesy Banga Studios (LEFT) A real-life “Auntie Mame,” Christina Matteucci’s effervescent, passionate, and caring personality makes her a beloved and comforting presence. Photo courtesy Fred Marcus Studios (TOP) Christina Matteucci hand-calligraphs name tags for every member of the wedding party. Photo courtesy Theo Milo Photography (ABOVE) Christina Matteucci and David Beahm believe their open and honest dialogue keeps the problem solving process smooth. Photo courtesy Theo Milo Photography



(TOP) Amid calls, texts, walkie-talkie summons, and emails—Christina Matteucci multi-tasks in the midst of a multi-tent build out in Aspen, Colorado. Photo courtesy Theo Milo Photography (ABOVE) Event producer on some of the most complex projects, Christina Matteucci sits in the “eye of the hurricane” when hundreds of vendors collaborate on a David Beahm experience. Photo courtesy Theo Milo Photography (RIGHT) Christina Matteucci puts on the final touches. Photo courtesy Shawn Connell

and grieved for my grandmother, for my father, for the city, for what had seemed like such a promising future just six months earlier.

The one thing that made me happy was to flip through the pages of my beloved bridal magazines, which I’d been subscribing to since I was 12 years old. Then one day, I thought, “If this is the only thing that’s making me happy, why don’t I do this?”

So I went down to the internet café on my day off, and I signed up for this newfangled website called theknot.com and created a profile as a fake bride. I found all the designers in the industry and sorted them by how expensive they were, not knowing how else to figure out who’s good. Then one day, along with names like Colin Cowie and Preston Bailey, I saw this name that I’d never seen before, David Beahm. I did some research and discovered that although he was relatively new on the scene, he had just done Catherine Zeta Jones and Michael Douglas’ wedding.

Okay, I thought, this guy is an artist—he probably just needs some organization. I could help him create his business. I didn’t know anything about this man, but I knew that he was the one.

So the first Monday of the month, I would fax him a cover letter and a resume. And every Wednesday, I would call his office to make sure he got the fax and see if there were any openings that month.

That went on for eight months before he finally gave me an interview.

I started as a secretary and I made myself indispensable over the next 20 years. Slowly but surely I started writing his proposals. I started meeting with clients. I started handling my own accounts and we’ve been together ever since.

Special Events: What is it like to be second-in-command at David Beahm—how is it empowering to be in that position?

Matteucci: From the start I treated the job like it was my name on the door, even though it wasn’t. I had been one paycheck away from waiting tables, and I knew my lifestyle in the city depended on making this opportunity a success. It was challenging. It was emotional. It was educational. It was thrilling. It was scary.

But the brilliance about being a number two is that it’s a masterclass in entrepreneurship, only without any of the risk. I get to make people happy. I get to make magic. I get to collaborate with my team. I get to be inspired by an amazing leader. I am credited on social media and beyond and paid well. I’m rewarded for my loyalty with time off. I travel the world on somebody else’s dime in luxury, and I have zero legal liability.

It can be a massive steppingstone for eventually owning your own business for those who aren’t ready to take the dive immediately. It can also create a lifelong partnership, which is what David and I have. It is extraordinarily fulfilling, both professionally and personally.

Special Events: What can others learn from your experiences in this amazing field?

Matteucci: Persistence is key, but so is trusting your gut. There was something in me that just knew this is the guy. I had the wonderful genius naivete of those who are young enough to believe anything is possible and I listened to that in a way that I think is more difficult as you get older. If we can tap into that, no matter how old or jaded we get, we will find the universe has more for us than we may think.

One of the things I’ve learned is that the relationship between the number one and number two is a very delicate one. There must be give and take from both sides. It’s like a mentorship, which a lot of people think only flows in one direction. But mentorship is a very fluid thing.



The brilliance about being a number two is that it's a masterclass in entrepreneurship, only without any of the risk. **I get to make people happy. I get to make magic. I get to collaborate with my team. I get to be inspired by an amazing leader.** I travel the world on somebody else's dime in luxury, and I have zero legal liability.

Special Events: *For the number-ones among us, what are some of the secrets your number-two will never tell you?*

Matteucci: One secret that your number two will never tell you is that we challenge you because we believe in bettering what we already have, like how a diamond doesn't come out of the earth perfectly polished—it needs abrasion. Part of that abrasion is being able to manage up and mentor your number one, but also being receptive as a number two to the mentorship that your number one is bringing you.

The other big secret is that you might have invented the next best thing since sliced bread, but that's not your legacy. Your legacy is the team that you build, because that team is going to not only carry your vision through to fruition, but also carry it forward.

The greatest achievement is if you can build a team that thinks like you but challenges you and fights for you and pushes through for you in the most difficult times because every person working there shares the same ethos and values. It's the "why" of what you do is what matters. And if the why is to create an amazing community that's about legacy and about teaching and about developing and moving forward, then that's the team that's going to be a success.

Special Events: *What have been some of the defining moments in your career so far? What did you learn from them about yourself, the work, and life?*

Matteucci: I have learned so much from the challenges we face now due to COVID. For example, we're all aware of how difficult the supply

chain is now in special events and catering. I had an absolutely amazing family [client] who had been through the darkest days of COVID. They did everything to ensure that their guests would be safe, and they wanted it to be perfect for the bride and groom.

They really loved all those beautiful, delicate flower varieties from Holland, and we were ready to supply one of the most beautiful floral buys I'd ever seen. It was summer, and we brought a refrigerated truck to the venue to keep the flowers cool and safe. Then, as David and I were working, our head of production and our creative director approached us with ashen faces. The thermometer in the brand-new rental refrigerator truck had broken and all the flowers had frozen solid.

The wedding was the next day.

Without saying a word to each other,



The rigorously detailed Beahm Team considers the delicate balance of floral vs. space for a guest dining experience onsite in Aspen, Colorado. Photo courtesy The Milo Photography



(LEFT) Christina works tirelessly to ensure the “wow moments” are perfectly orchestrated. Photo courtesy Banga Studios. (ABOVE) Having worked together for 20 years, David and Christina can silently communicate with one another. Photo courtesy Dani Fine Photography

our team rallied. We emptied the truck, figured out what the loss was, and got on the phone with our purveyor to find whatever replacement flowers were to be found. Within 30 minutes we had ascertained the loss, and sourced replacements for 90% of the flowers that had died. By 6:00 p.m. we had the replacements. To this day, the client has no idea what happened.

What that teaches me is that anything you can imagine can happen, but there is always a solution. It may not be the solution that you originally wanted, it may be the solution five pegs down on the list, but there is a solution.

And the other thing that I’ve learned is that as an industry, we are master problem solvers. And when you have a team that is led by someone who has developed each of them to their strengths and to their capacities, that team even in the face of disaster will solve the problem with no screaming, no drama, just calm professionals tackling the problem.

On the speaking side of my career, I recently did a gig where the audiovisual totally went out on me. As a former TEDx speaker, people expect me to arrive with the fire and when you have a glitch like that, it can be debilitating.

I pushed through that talk—I even got a standing ovation—but I walked

See Christina Matteucci LIVE

Join keynote Christina Matteucci as she kicks off the 2022 Catersource + The Special Event with her session, *I Know You’re the Boss, but...* High energy, inspiring and with exceptional takeaway ideas, Matteucci, executive director for David Beahm Experiences, will leave you charged up for a profitable year!

Get all the details at www.thespecialeventshow.com.

off the stage so mad at myself because I couldn’t get past this desire for it to have been perfect.

After I retreated to my room and took a hot shower, I was able to look at it more holistically and recognize that everyone understands that tech glitches happen. One thing we talk about a lot in this COVID era is that everyone is entitled to grace—but we often forget to give a little grace to ourselves too.

And the other thing is that it was a perfect lesson in the fact that the universe conspires with you, not against you. That crowd wanted to be on my

side. And when I showed up later at the evening party, so many people came up to me and said, “What you delivered hit home. You changed me.” I couldn’t see that because I was so wrapped up in my own head about it not being perfect. You will have adversaries and challenges, but it’s important to look for the people who advocate for you and who are on your team.

Special Events: What are you looking forward to in 2022?

Matteucci: Of course, Catersource + The Special Event in May! I cannot wait to get on that stage and light it up. When I spoke at TEDx Beacon Street, it was very steeped in technology due to its relationship to MIT and Harvard. There were all these people solving spinal injuries through nanotechnology and writing the code for NASA space missions, and here I am talking about life as a number-two and parties—it must have been a refreshing change of pace!

But what I’m so excited about with Catersource + The Special Event is to be back with my own people, telling stories for people who understand what’s on the line when the flowers freeze. I’m so excited to be delivering this talk because event professionals know there’s no Venn diagrams or data sampling when it comes to creating a successful event. It’s hard. It’s passion. It’s drive. And that’s what I’m most excited about. ●



catersource® + THE SPECIAL EVENT®

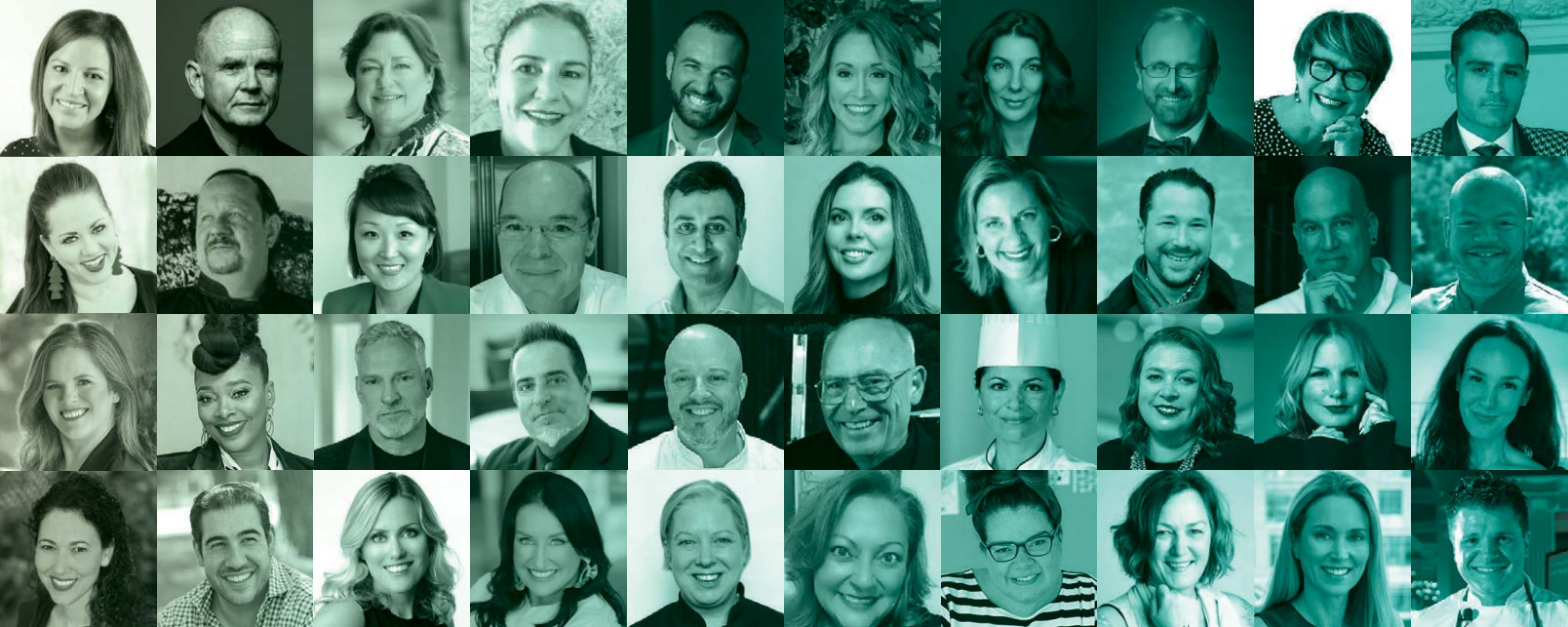
MAY 2-5, 2022 | ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER

conference.catersource.com | thespecialeventshow.com

Early bird rates end April 8.

Register today for the best rates of the year!





Catersource + The Special Event will provide the catering and event industry with an unmatched opportunity to learn the new skills needed to succeed. **Learn from these experts** and be part of the new era of catering and events!



Wednesday, May 4 • 9:00 a.m.
Opening General Session Keynote Speaker
Christina Matteucci
Executive Director, David Beahm Experiences





Cali

Here We
Come

Since 1985, The Special Event has served as an educational resource and expansive network for the special events industry.

As we work our way through one of the toughest times in its history, the need to gather and learn from one another, network, and celebrate is important! Join The Special Event, co-located with Catersource, as we celebrate the rise of this resilient industry.

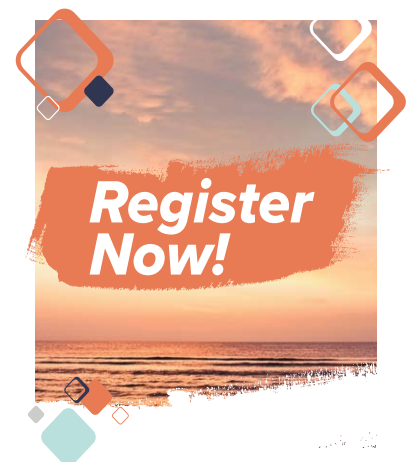
Don't miss a moment!

Arrive Monday afternoon 5/2, depart Friday morning 5/6

When making your travel arrangements, plan to arrive by Monday afternoon so that you can enjoy the entire Catersource + The Special Event experience!

Kick off your week by attending **Connect Live**, held at The Ranch, starting at 7:30 p.m. and ending at 10:30 p.m. End your week by joining us at the **Closing Night Celebration**. In between, you won't want to miss a thing.

Here's a look at all that will be offered!



Revolutionary Keynotes

See Christina Matteucci LIVE

At the Opening General Session on the tradeshow floor, Matteucci will kick off the 2022 Catersource + The Special Event conference and tradeshow with her session, “I Know You’re the Boss, but...” High energy, deeply embedded in our industry, and inspiring, Matteucci, will leave you with actionable takeaways on **Wednesday morning, May 4 at 9:00 a.m.** The Opening General Session is included in the purchase of any pass, from All Access to tradeshow only.



See Roy Choi LIVE

At the Closing General Session on the tradeshow floor, Choi will talk with SEARCH Chairwoman Kate Patay about food as a platform for activism and a catalyst for change on **Thursday morning, May 5 at 9:00 a.m.** The Closing General Session is included in the purchase of any education pass or tradeshow plus pass.



& Featured speakers



Shakira Brown

*"Stay Relevant!
Foster Creativity &
Innovation to Thrive,
Grow & Keep Pace with
Change"*

**11:15 a.m. Tuesday,
May 3**

*"Sidetrack Team
Burnout: Hone Your
Coaching Skills to
Motivate Your Staff &
Improve Operations"*

**2:30 p.m. Tuesday,
May 3**



Paulina Corvi

*"What Luxury
Wedding Clients Really
Want"*

**4:00 p.m. Tuesday,
May 3**



Adrienne Harris

*"It's the Year of the
Bride | 2023 Bridal
Fashion Edition"*

**1:15 p.m. Tuesday,
May 3**



Michael Levitt

*"Burnout Proof In A
Hybrid World"*

**2:30 p.m. Thursday,
May 5**



Jennifer Trotter

*"Jedi Mind Tricks:
Harness the Power
of Communication
to Lead Clients to
Magically See Things
Your Way"*

**1:00 p.m. Wednesday,
May 4**



Cindy Novotny

*"Building a Team
Back!"*

**8:30 a.m. Tuesday,
May 3**

*"Objection Handling &
Power Negotiating"*

**10:00 a.m. Tuesday,
May 3**



**Christopher
Salem**

*"The Secret to Creating
an Extraordinary
Experience with Your
Customers"*

**2:30 p.m. Tuesday,
May 3**



Charessa Sawyer

*"A Candid
Conversation LIVE on
Mental Illness in the
Event Industry"*

**1:00 p.m. Wednesday,
May 4**

*"A Candid
Conversation with
the Event Therapy™
Lounge"*

**2:30 p.m. Wednesday,
May 4**



Cece Todd

*"Staying Relevant as an
Event Professional in a
Fast-Paced World"*

**10:00 a.m. Tuesday,
May 3**

*"Vetting Your Clients:
Stop Wasting Time with
Clients That Don't Fit"*

**2:30 p.m. Tuesday,
May 3**



PATRICK CROSSON (PC EVENTS AND EXPERIENCES), **NOELLE MCNERNEY** (LADIDADI XM) AND **YINKA FREEMAN** (TRIPLE POCKET EVENTS) PRESENT "CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE - LEVERAGING RELATIONSHIPS AT ALL LEVELS. Photo courtesy WTA Photos via SpotMy Photos

Event inspiration

Get ready to perfect your event offerings in 2022 and beyond; there is a terrific line up of event-forward classes available throughout the conference. Journey through the world of florals with a focus on wedding floral trends, the latest bloom varieties, and new supplies that make it easy to wow your clients and their guests. Explore unique and exotic event venues, find out the latest trends in live, virtual, and hybrid events, get inspired to incorporate cannabis into your events, and learn what weddings will look like moving forward—these are just a few of the event-centric classes you will experience.



NELSON GONZALEZ (EVOLUTION EVENTOS) DELIVERED A HANDS-ON FLORAL WORKSHOP IN 2021. THIS YEAR, ENJOY **BRON HANSBORO** (FLORAL FORECAST: LOOKING AHEAD AT INDUSTRY + TRENDS) AND **LIZA ROESER & DEREK WOODRUFF** (WHAT'S TRENDING IN FLORAL DESIGN?)

Photo courtesy WTA Photos via SpotMy Photos

Certified Catering Consultants

Need a quick consultation about some aspect of your business? Not a caterer? Don't worry, the Certified Catering Consultants (CCC) are experts in many applicable areas. They will offer free half hour appointments on site to address your hospitality-related challenges, identify your highest value opportunities, and/or help you improve your business and ROI. The CCC team has been



consulting for over 20 years and many of them ran businesses of their own—or still do! Head to room 262 to sign up for a free consultation during show hours Tuesday through Thursday.

questions—their answers. The learning is fun and organic; these sessions are often identified as some of the most popular year after year.

DON'T MISS THE INSPIRATION ON THE TRADESHOW FLOOR.
Photo courtesy WTA Photos
via SpotMy Photos

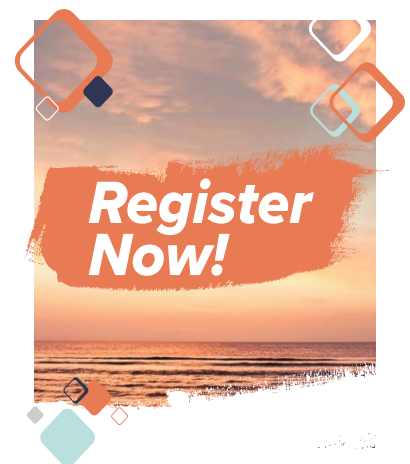
Candid conversations

Always a favorite, Candid Conversation sessions are free-wheeling “unsessions”—no set agenda or full on Powerpoint presentations; just an industry professional at the front of the room, ready to answer your questions about topics they excel at. Ask **Jackie Watson** your toughest planning questions; **Alicia Schiro** shares the secrets to her success as a small business making large money; and don't miss this year's panel on mental health featuring **Reuben Bell, Fausto, Charessa Sawyer, Suzi McMerty Shands, Melissa Tibben, and Terrica**. If you need a little extra support, **Sawyer** is waiting at the The Event Therapy™ Lounge afterward. Your

Discover ideas on the tradeshow floor

The award-winning tradeshow floor will offer a plethora of trendsetting and relevant exhibitors and sponsors for you to browse, learn from, taste samples and buy from. These exhibitors are here to help you grow your business and recognize the potential you have for 2022 and beyond.

Additionally, a culinary competition and the excitement of the Opening General Session with keynote Christina Matteucci launch the first day of the tradeshow floor, with the return of the Swizzle competition and Closing Session with keynote Roy Choi on Thursday in conversation with SEARCH Foundation chairwoman, Kate Patay.



Industry accolades: award recipients

Each year, we honor industry leaders who we, at Catersource + The Special Event, feel have made a significant and positive impact on our industries. Join us in celebrating these remarkable individuals at our annual **Leadership Lunch on Thursday, May 4** at 24 Carrots Catering and Events' The Colony House.

Enjoy a beautiful lunch with your



colleagues and peers, and celebrate with recipients **Rosemary Kowalski** (Michael Roman Lifetime Achievement award); **Kelly Murphy** (Richard Carbotti Gala award) and **Lenny Talarico, CSEP, CHE** (Special Events Gala Lifetime Achievement award), as well as the **surprise award recipient of the Steve Kemble award**.

Catersource + The Special Event 2022 will also mark the return of the annual **ACE, Gala, and ICA CATIE Awards**, which will be presented at the **Opening Night Party on Tuesday, May 3**. Turn to page 40 to see this year's Gala Award nominees.

2021 CARBOTTI GALA
AWARD RECIPIENT **ROBIN
SELDEN**. Photo courtesy WTA
Photos via SpotMy Photos





Food Truck Roundup!

Join your colleagues Tuesday afternoon from noon to 1:15 p.m. outside the Anaheim Convention Center on the Arena Plaza. Soak in the California sunshine, go over your afternoon conference schedule, network, and enjoy local chef-owned and operated artisan food trucks!



Enchanting evening events

Every evening features a different venue and event theme, all developed to bring you the latest trends in a setting that also grants you the time and space to connect with friends, peers, and colleagues.

MONDAY MAY 2 • THE RANCH

CHAIR: Tracy Evans-Bowles, Flawless Weddings & Events

On Monday evening, head to The Ranch for an exciting opener to the week. As you arrive into town, join us for “California Dreaming!” Connect and network as we highlight a few of Southern California’s iconic cities and landmarks.

TUESDAY MAY 3 • MUCKENTHALER CULTURAL CENTER

CHAIRS: Rosemary Vera & Sarah Kuhlberg, Colette’s Catering & Events

The Opening Night Party at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center, will take you on a journey through Southern California. It’ll be a culinary and event experience that explores the richness of Orange County, the excitement and energy of Los Angeles, and the art deco styling of Palm Desert. Enjoy wine bars, beer gardens, bonfires, and regionally inspired cuisine.

WEDNESDAY MAY 4 • HOUSE OF BLUES ANAHEIM

CHAIRS: Dina Morales & Amy Sleeper, Haute

At **The Event Experience**, you will be immersed in an event trends

showcase inside a staging, lighting, and sound state-of-the-art venue. Lively bars coupled with cozy nooks make this event space a prime networking haven.

THURSDAY MAY 5 • MARRIOTT ANAHEIM

CHAIR: Jenniffer Bello, JB
Experiences

Celebrate with colleagues amidst an entertainment-filled experience as we wrap up a great week for our industry during the Closing Night Celebration. Casual attire welcome.

Associations & groups

Associations and groups (some of them new to the conferences) will be present at Catersource + The Special Event, many of which will also have booths on the Tradeshow floor and/or in the conference area. Take the time to seek these people out and learn more! We are all in this together and hope to learn from each other. Here is a look:

- Association for Wedding Professionals International (AFWPI)
- Black in Events (BIE)
- Certified Catering Consultants (CCC)
- California Events Coalition (CEC)
- International Caterers Association (ICA)
- International Caterers Association Educational Foundation (ICAEF)
- International Live Events Association (ILEA)
- Leading Caterers of America (LCA)
- National Society of Black Wedding & Event Professionals
- SEARCH Foundation
- Wedding International Professionals Association (WIPA)



FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES CAN GATHER TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE WEEK. Photos courtesy WTA Photos via SpotMy Photos.



Networking opportunities

Beyond the evening events and Tuesday morning welcome gathering, pass time has been increased between sessions to allow more opportunity to say hello and move between tradeshow floor and conference rooms. Most sessions allow 30 minutes pass time. Additionally, join your friends outside on Tuesday at lunch time for a California-style food truck round up, enjoy time with peers in our two conference-area networking spaces, and buy a ticket to our Thursday Leadership Lunch at 24 Carrots Catering and Events' beautiful venue, The Colony House, to discuss high level ideas with peers.

Earn education credits

Continuing education is an important aspect of any career trajectory and Catersource + The Special Event is ready to help.

All classes have been approved for CMP (Certified Meeting Professional) credits



Go to "Associations & Accreditations" on the left-hand rail on schedule.catersource.com and sort to find what you need!

Schedule at a Glance

MONDAY

Venue/Culinary Tour

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Connect Live at The Ranch

7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

TUESDAY

Conference education

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Food Truck Roundup

Noon to 1:15 p.m.

ACE/Gala/CATIE awards

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Opening Night Party at Muckenthaler Cultural Center

7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Opening General Session

9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
(doors at 8:30 a.m.)

Tradeshow floor

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Conference education

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Event Experience at House of Blues

6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

SEARCH's Annual Signature Event

9:30 p.m. to Midnight

THURSDAY

Closing General Session

9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
(doors at 8:30 a.m.)

Tradeshow floor

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Conference education

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Leadership Lunch at The Colony House

11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Closing Night Celebration at Marriott Anaheim

7:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

And the NOMINEES ARE...

Let's give a round of applause to this year's
Gala Award nominees!

by Amber Kispert



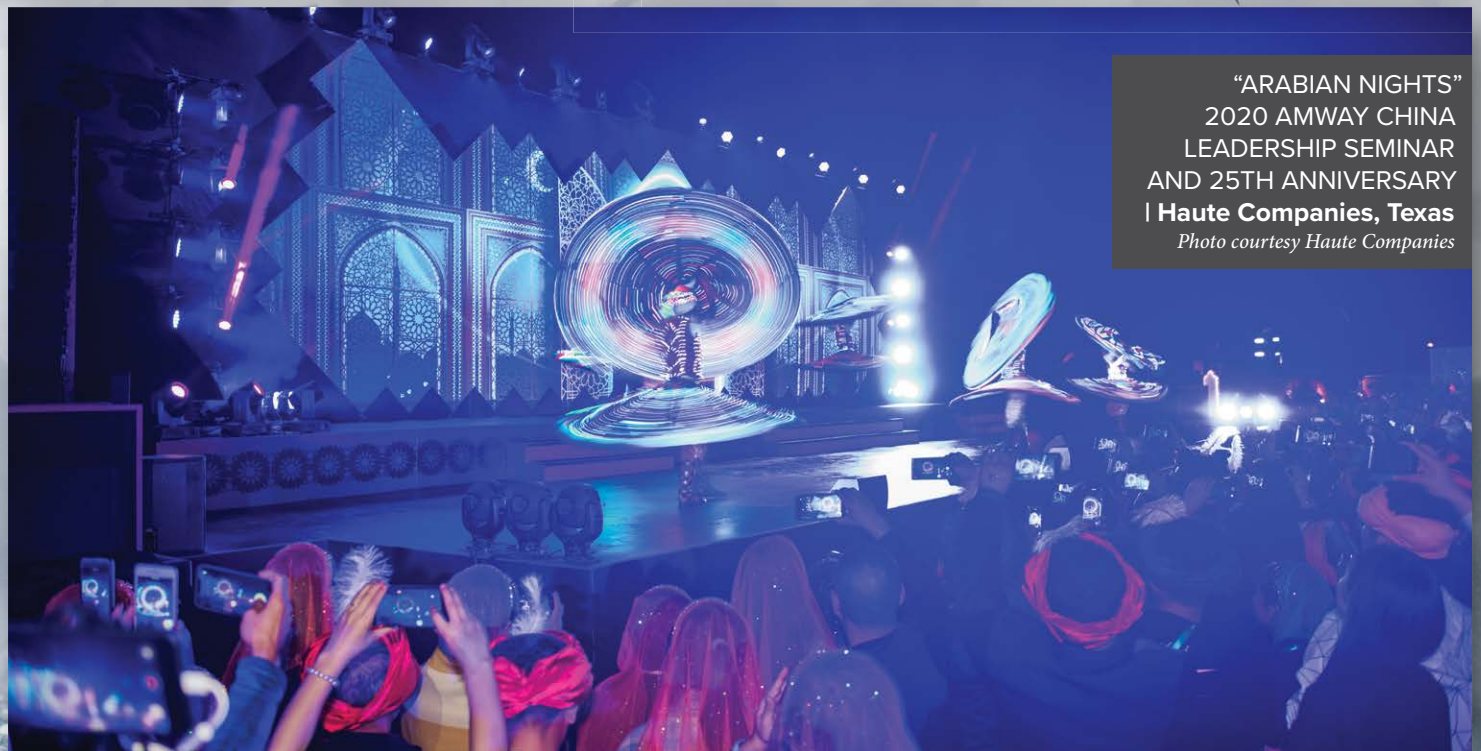
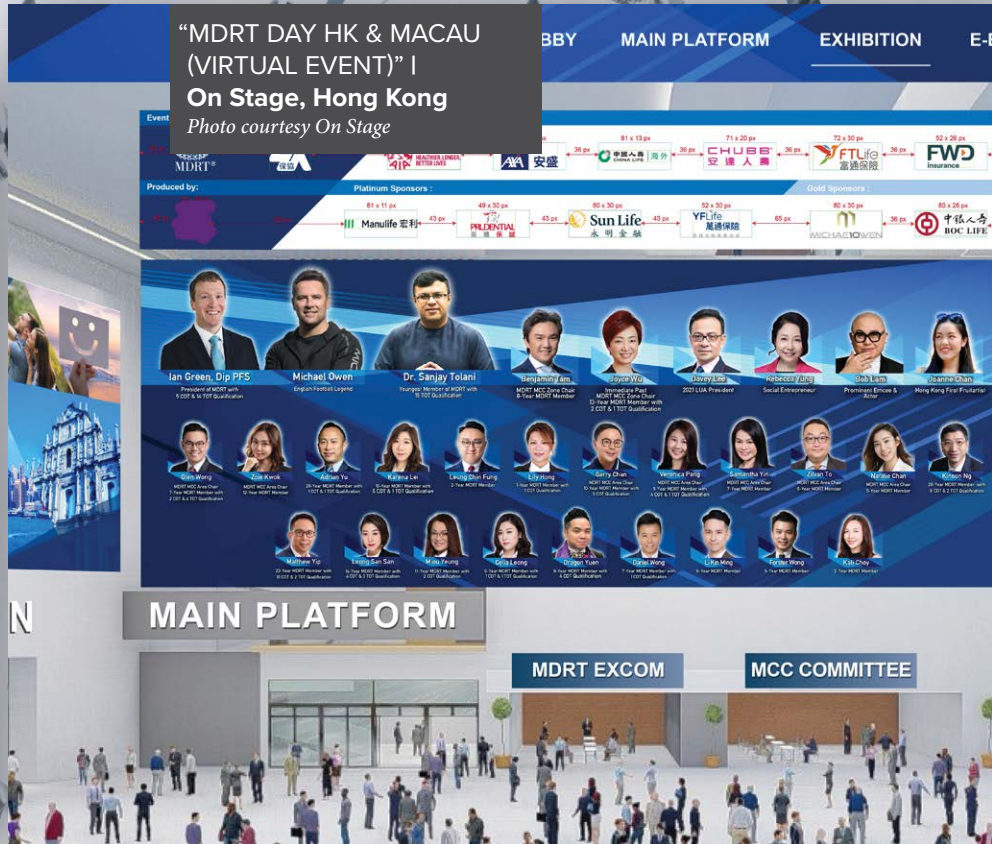
The **Gala Awards** may have taken a backseat to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, but now they're back! Special Events magazine is delighted to announce the nominees for the **2022 Gala Awards**, which will be awarded during **Catersource + The Special Event May 2–5** in **Anaheim, CA**. *Catersource* magazine will also be honoring companies with its **ACE Awards**. Turn to **page 64** in the accompanying magazine for this year's nominees.

Without any further ado, please congratulate your 2022 Gala Awards nominees!

BEST EVENT PRODUCED FOR A CORPORATION OR ASSOCIATION



EBAY OPEN 2020.DIGITAL | eBay
Deutschland GmbH, Germany
Photo courtesy © eBay / Fotografien:
Patricia Kalisch



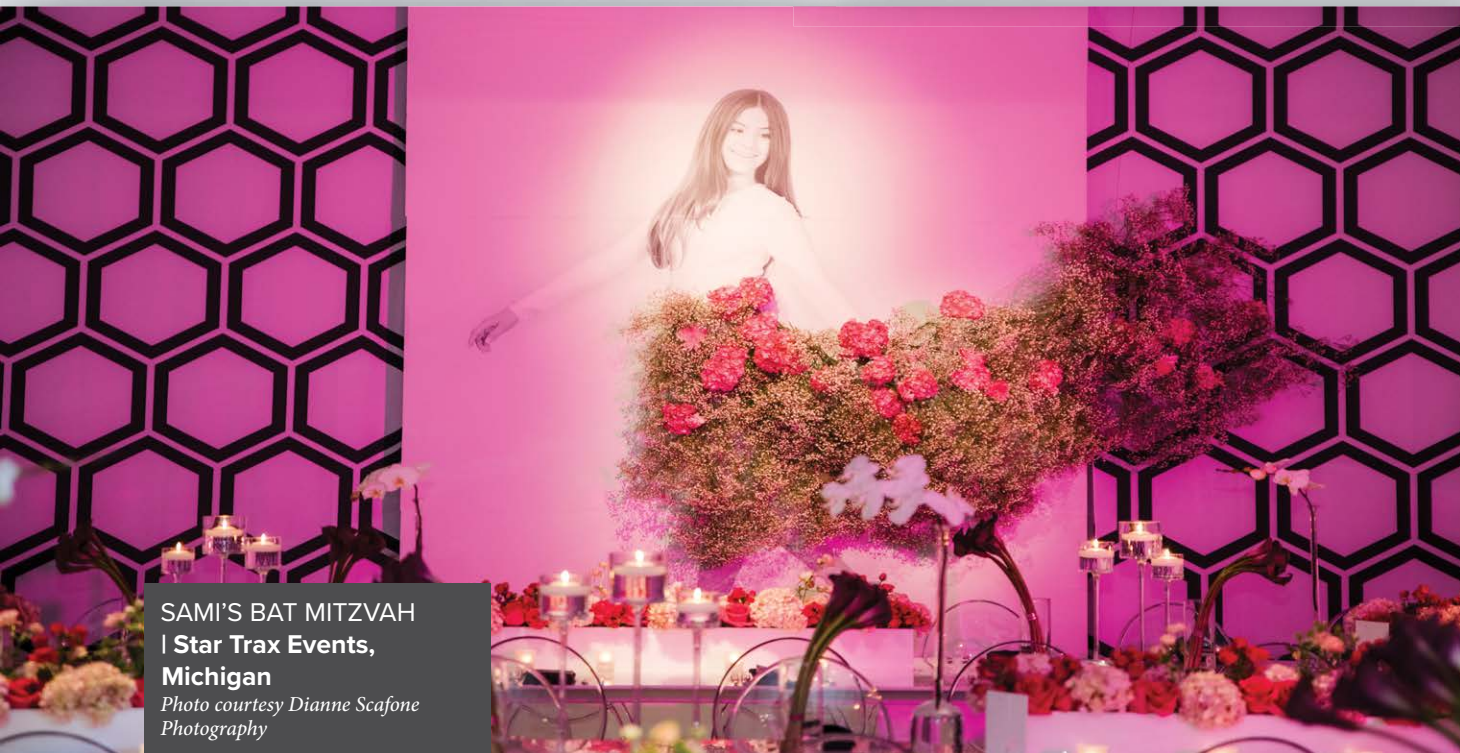
"ARABIAN NIGHTS"
2020 AMWAY CHINA
LEADERSHIP SEMINAR
AND 25TH ANNIVERSARY
| Haute Companies, Texas
Photo courtesy Haute Companies

BEST EVENT FOR A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL: BUDGET UNDER \$1,000 PER GUEST

A MUSEUM WITH
A LOT OF LOVE |
Beijing Chaoran
Yingfeng Consulting
Co., Ltd, China
Photo courtesy Rayson Studio



A SPOOKTACULAR NIGHT
| Elias Events, Texas
Photo courtesy Morris Malakoff



SAMI'S BAT MITZVAH
| Star Trax Events,
Michigan
*Photo courtesy Dianne Scafone
Photography*

BEST EVENT FOR A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL: BUDGET \$1,000 AND ABOVE PER GUEST



**HEART: MAZE | Beijing
Chaoran Yingfeng
Consulting Co., Ltd, China**
Photo courtesy Chengmin Liu

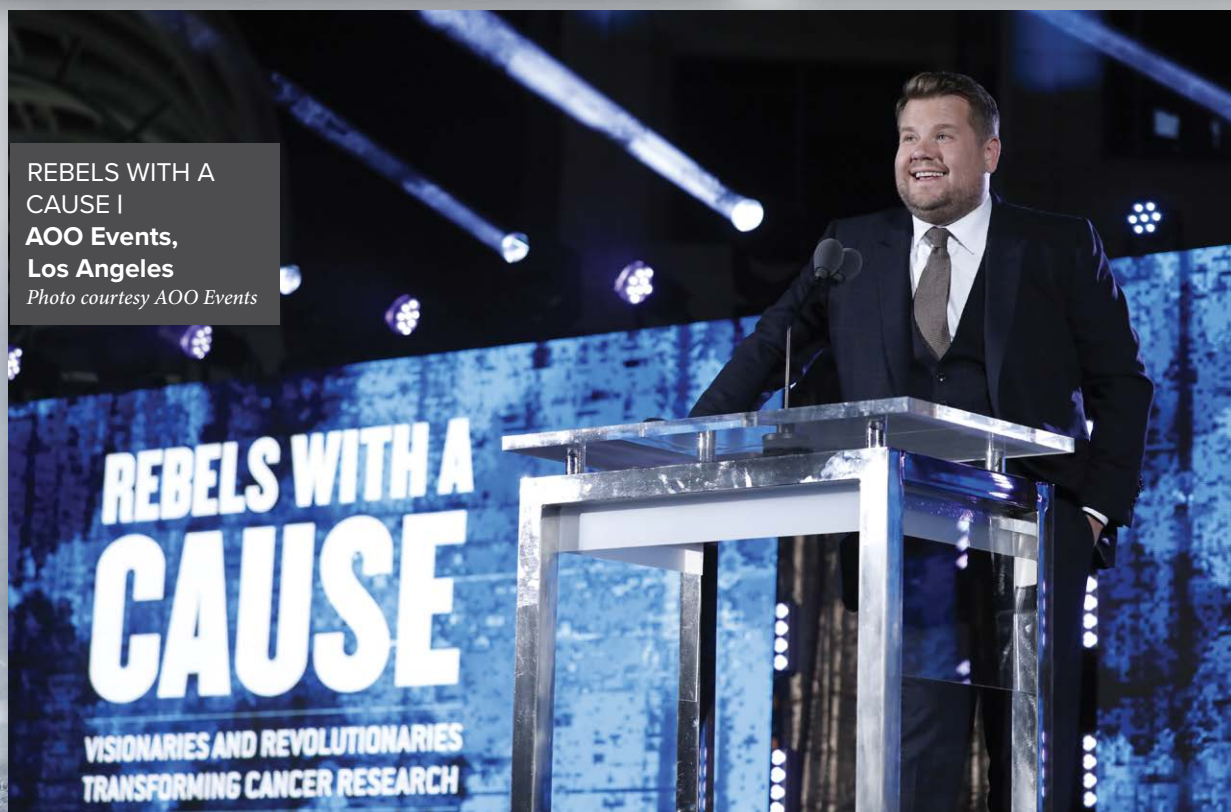
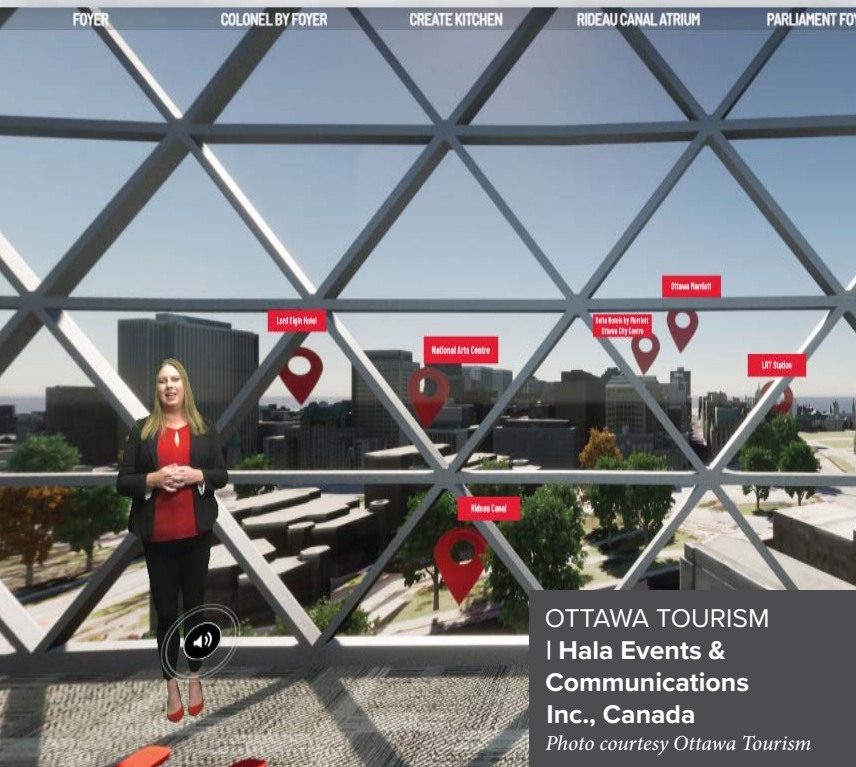


**MC60 - 60TH
BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION | Table
6 Productions, Florida**
*Photo courtesy Damon
Tucci Photography*



**ROSEY'S BIRTHDAY
BASH | KG Consulting
Event Agency & Lenny
Talarico Productions,
Las Vegas**
*Photo courtesy IZZO PRO
Las Vegas*

BEST FUNDRAISING OR NONPROFIT EVENT



BEST MULTIPLE-DAY EVENT PROGRAM



PANGAEA'S
JURASSIC FIGHT
NIGHT | **Steve LeVine**
Entertainment and Public
Relations, Arizona
Photo courtesy Scott Chaffee



EBAY OPEN 2020.
DIGITAL | **eBay**
Deutschland
GmbH, Germany
*Photo courtesy © eBay /
Fotografin: Patricia Kalisch*



GROHE X - BRAND
EXPERIENCE HUB |
GROHE, Germany
Photo courtesy GROHE

TOTAL DÉCOR



CHUN JIANG HUA
YUE YE | Beijing
Chaoran Yingfeng
Consulting Co.,
Ltd, China
*Photo courtesy NZ
Production*



WEDDING OF
SAMANTHA GREENBERG
AND EVAN WEINBERG
| Tailored Twig, Florida
Photo courtesy Tailored Twig



REBELS WITH A
CAUSE: ELLISON
| AOO Events,
Los Angeles
Photo courtesy AOO Events

BEST WEDDING



**"7 DAY PRIVATE
ESTATE WEDDING"
| Jessie Khaira,
Canada**

*Photo courtesy Blush
Wedding Photography*



**NAVEEN & RISHI
WEDDING | Nilyum
Event Design & Wedding
Planner, Turkey**

*Photo courtesy
House of Osmanghani*



**"TTKK.9 LOVE
RADIO" | Wei Zhang,
Beijing Chaoran
Yingfeng Consulting
Co., Ltd, China**

Photo courtesy Brandy Studio

BEST ENTERTAINMENT



"ARABIAN NIGHTS" 2020
AMWAY CHINA LEADERSHIP
SEMINAR AND 25TH
ANNIVERSARY | **Haute
Companies, Texas**
Photo courtesy Haute Companies



MC60 - 60TH BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION | **Table
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17th Annual DMC SPOTLIGHT

It's back! After a year off, *Special Events* magazine is excited to once again highlight the **biggest brands in the world of DMCs**—the experts with insider access to the best destinations on earth.

UNDER \$5 MILLION ANNUAL REVENUE

BIXEL & COMPANY, A DMC Network Company

Los Angeles, CA

www.bixelco.com/

Top Officer Name & Title: Dabney Bixel, President & CEO

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 175 events combining virtual, hybrid and live events.

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$4.5 million

Capabilities: Bixel & Company is a full-service Destination Management, Event Production, and Meeting Management company based in Los Angeles, but also operating in greater SoCal region and nationwide. It has been a DMC and event production company for 34 years and is renowned for producing innovative events coupled with unparalleled execution, in addition to exhibiting a masterful grasp of a destination's ins and outs. From Fortune 500

companies to boutique independent firms, its diverse clientele entrusts them with their most critical event, destination, incentive, and meeting needs. Furthermore, its event prowess ranges from large scale productions of all sorts to the most private of corporate retreats and board meetings to exclusive VIP social gatherings.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: The Bixel team has produced multiple notable events in 2021 including a unique virtual meeting for a longtime client featuring Magic Johnson as a guest speaker and Meghan Trainor as a live musical performer, among many other star-studded virtual programs. During the fall, the company produced a beautiful beach bash at its private beach club. After more of the COVID restrictions were lifted, Bixel & Company was the first DMC plus event production company to plan and execute events at both the famed Ronald Reagan Library and various Hollywood studio backlots. A plush corporate retreat in Santa Barbara/Montecito was in store

for another longtime client a few months back. This took place at the gorgeous San Ysidro Ranch in Montecito. The team closed out the year with a bang at a fabulous, exclusive Beverly Hills mansion. Considering the hindering COVID restrictions in most of SoCal, it turned out to be both a fruitful and innovative year for the Bixel team.

Trends to Watch: One of the primary trends that we are seeing is prolonged fatigue with the monotony of virtual functions and the desire to experience more and more live events and getting back to normalcy. However, having the tools to produce comprehensive and dynamic virtual events and meetings will probably remain crucial to our business indefinitely. Forecasts and predictions are very tricky at this juncture, but the future is looking positive for our industry.

CHICAGO IS
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CHICAGO IS...
A Global DMC Partner

Chicago, IL

www.chicagois.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Katherine Kirk Fenech, CEO and Managing Partner

**Average Number of Programs/
Events Per Year:** 30

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$3 million
to \$5 million

Capabilities: Chicago Is... provides services in the Chicagoland area as well as the Midwest region. Chicago Is... began over 40 years ago as one of the first DMCs. The founding owner recognized that large citywide conventions needed additional support and services. Over the decades Chicago Is... continues to be the top choice for full event production in corporate, association, and incentive programs. While the pandemic changed how many businesses function, the team continues to offer boutique solutions to its clients during unprecedented times. Ten-year employee Katherine

Kirk Fenech is now at the helm with lofty goals to drive the business forward and continue the company's innovative foundation.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: The Chicago Is... team was elated to produce 17 in-person events from June 2021 through December 2021. A typical year would yield 30 to 50 programs, but post-pandemic the team believes this is a victory to celebrate. Many of these programs were last-minute and required strategic planning to scale quickly into production. While most of the programs were hosted in Chicago, the team was fortunate to produce events in Grand Rapids, MI and Milwaukee, WI in 2021. The team looks forward to a successful 2022 with contracts in place indicating an

eventful year!

Trends to Watch: Chicago Is... believes the trend of quick turnaround will continue through 2022, and potentially the next few years. We are recommending flexible space and strategizing with clients on solutions for last-minute scalability while keeping their initial financial commitment minimal. Technology will still be very important for events, but the hybrid model will slow in the coming months. We predict a shift in the use of technology from hybrid to utilizing more AI integration with events. The final trend we will see is based on the client's industry dictating budgets. Some have seen a surplus during the pandemic and others, while eager to meet again in-person, will have lower budgets.



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COSTA RICA DMC

Costa Rica

www.CostaRicaDMC.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Mauricio Arevalo, President

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 9

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$500,000

Capabilities: Costa Rica DMC Inc is a boutique destination management company that designs and operates incentive travel programs, business meetings, and deluxe travel arrangements for corporate clients and third parties in three important destinations, the Central Valley, Guanacaste, and the Central Pacific. Services include deluxe meet and greet; full and half day tours; spouse programs; individually crafted extension programs; golf tournaments; team building; community outreach; group cohesion; achievement of corporate goals; deep-sea fishing; deluxe transportation; signature events; private venues; fine entertainment; upscale and trendy restaurants; experienced travel directors; onsite staff; site inspection assistance; refined local arts and crafts; destination collateral and promotional materials

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: Pharma company communications division employees. RV company.

Trends to Watch: Simple, elegant and fun.

CUSTOM IRELAND

Ireland

www.customireland.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Crothúr Murphy, DMCP, CITP/ Owner, Managing Director

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 25 (excluding COVID restrictive years)

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$2 million

(in a year partially in lockdown and with COVID restrictions for 2021).

Capabilities: Custom Ireland is a full-service DMC offering a full range of ground services and opportunities for international organizations visiting Ireland for incentives, events, and meetings. It celebrated its 25th year during the pandemic and while government guidelines and restrictions prevented them from hosting an event to celebrate, the team marked its milestone with a brand refresh and gathered its team to engage in one of its favorite experiences that it offers to clients (a team-building beach art experience) to celebrate the anniversary and reveal its new logo. Primary business is Incentive Travel and primary markets served are North America, Germany, and the UK. The company offers highly personal authentic experiences—some that may not even be “touring” products in Ireland, but with a strong network of ground partners who can offer a true “sense of place” for their visitors. When clients return home, Custom Ireland wants them to know that they’ve truly been to Ireland.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021:

In 2021, facing travel restrictions, lockdowns, and strict government guidelines, the company focused on smaller groups that could be accommodated under those rules. Goal: to always provide the best overall experience, postponements were encouraged when Custom Ireland knew that the client’s experience would be compromised due to COVID-related restrictions. Ultimately, the team was able to accommodate smaller groups and welcome them with the world-renowned hospitality that Ireland is known for. They created purpose-built, unique outdoor dining venues and proposed spending as much time outdoors as possible, engaged

in culturally immersive experiences. Another key program initiated to combat the ever-pressing travel restrictions was its Individual Travel Incentive program—the first of its kind in Ireland.

Trends to Watch: The biggest trends in the industry from our perspective are the increasing demand for sustainability in our programs, concerns for the impact that travel has on our environment, and how to combat this through carbon offsetting. As for the creative and experiential side, we see increased interest in authentic activities that involve smaller groups for a more personal experience. Clients want their delegates to feel more immersed in a destination at a granular level and hearing those very personal stories that help them get a true sense of place.



DECO PRODUCTIONS, A DMC Network Company

Miami, FL

www.decoproductions.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Nicholas Zazzera, President

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 75

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$2.5 million

Capabilities: DECO Productions has served the South Florida community in special event productions and destination management for over 30 years. Hailed as the “go-to” company for creativity, customer service,

value, and dependability its clients have relied on them for producing impeccable events. Housed in a 20,000 square foot facility are artisans, designers, carpenters, seamstresses, and production personnel who create the magic that is the “DECO” experience.

Noteworthy Programs/Events

in 2021: The Association of LensCrafters Leaseholding Doctors, also known as ALLDocs hosted their annual October meeting at the Ritz Carlton Key Biscayne Florida. The purpose of this meeting is to give the attendees an opportunity to network with their fellow LensCrafters leaseholder colleagues from throughout the U.S. and Canada. The meeting was attended by both doctors and spouses, and consisted of DMC services such as transportation, two nights of décor, two off-site evening functions, six tours, four spousal programs, and entertainment. The program revenue was \$250,000.

This year, DECO Productions had the opportunity to produce the Annual Intercontinental Miami Make-A-Wish Ball in early November. After having to skip 2020 due to the pandemic, DECO Productions made the 2021 ball stronger than ever. This event featured the theme of “Galactica” which included custom entrance pieces, table décor, stage sets, themed entertainment, a performance from Jennifer Hudson, a fashion show, and an after party. This year’s event raised over \$2.7 million.

Trends to Watch: We are expecting to see a rise in weddings and social events for 2022. We have been seeing unique themed events on the rise and non-traditional décor looks. Along with these events comes an emphasis on guest health and safety, so more outdoor events, social distancing, and masks. As for corporate events, we are seeing

an increase in hybrid events and at home event boxes to ensure attendees feel more engaged.



DESILVA MEETING CONSULTANTS, A DMC Network Company

Paia, Maui, HI

www.desilvadmc.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Josh DeSilva, DMCP, President

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 40-50 Programs / 100+ Events

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$3.5 million

Capabilities: Full-service, accredited DMC founded in 2003. Offices on Maui and Hawaii Island servicing all major islands in the state of Hawaii. Primarily service Fortune 1000 companies. Specializing in high-touch, customized incentive programs. Primary services include transportation, logistics, local staffing, exclusive tours/activities, décor, lighting, production, A/V, entertainment, CSR programs, teambuilding, speakers, local gifts/amenities, photography/videography services. Serving all market segments including high-tech, financial/insurance, auto, manufacturing, health/pharma and more.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in

2021: Exclusive helicopter tours from a private farm with stunning mountain and offshore island views on Maui. Mimosas and farm-to-table hors d'oeuvres from the farm served upon landing. Hawaii Island private ranch lunch with live music overlooking historic rainforest valleys and ocean. Guests were brought in from waterfall hikes, zipline tours,

and lounging by the pool to enjoy a surprise catered lunch at this very special overlook. Brought in Mick Fleetwood and his all-star band to play a surprise concert for top pharmaceutical sales associates. Worked with one of the world’s top German car companies to produce a multi-day experiential marketing event where the new models were tested out on stunning roads throughout Hawaii Island.

Trends to Watch: Corporate meetings and association events will move back toward committing to holding live events, but they will also continue to have a strong focus on hybrid options for attendees. However, incentive travel programs will return in-force to exotic locations and “bucket list” city destinations. COVID-19 will become more accepted as part of the world we now live in. Prevention and mitigation protocols will improve and be better managed. Care options for those that fall ill will be better managed with more positive outcomes. Companies that have spent less money on travel incentives over the past two years will increase budgets and will nicely reward top performing employees that stayed with the company. A continuation of increased mindfulness regarding sustainability and climate change. Electric vehicles will become more common for group transportation.

DESTINATION SOUTH MEETINGS + EVENTS, A DMC Network Company

Atlanta, GA

www.destinationsouth.com/

Top Officer Name & Title: Cynthia Alford, DMCP, President

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 150

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$4.46 million

17TH ANNUAL DMC SPOTLIGHT

Capabilities: Destination South Meetings + Events is a fully accredited powerhouse of destination management, event production, event marketing and meeting management in virtual, hybrid, and in-person environments. Established in 1995 by President and Managing Director, Cynthia Alford, DMCP, the goal is to provide innovative and transformative event experiences for clients worldwide. Offices in both Atlanta, GA and Charleston, SC. The professionals at Destination South have numerous years of experience in the corporate, association, and nonprofit markets on events large and small—ranging from 50 to 40,000 attendees—as well as incentive programs in the Southeast and across the country.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: The company stayed very busy throughout the pandemic producing virtual programs from Kabul, Afghanistan to Atlanta. One of its virtual programs is currently nominated for an ADMEI award and in the running for an Allie Award. It also produced several safe live events through its Coastal office in Charleston, SC. The vast outdoor offerings allowed them to continue with teambuilding beach Olympics, cocktail parties on the many rooftops, and even a few poolside soirees.

Trends to Watch: We believe the biggest trend in events for the upcoming year will be the return of large-scale events but with continued safety measures. People are eager to get back together but want to ensure that doing so is safe and enjoyable. We will continue to see more domestic incentive trips versus foreign. Our timelines will be shorter than ever, but our client's ROI on events will be bigger than ever. The time together will really be valued and very well thought out. For many

clients, hybrid events are here to stay. Clients are seeking to make events as inclusive as possible, and this means meeting guests at their comfort level with live versus virtual events and the hybrid model allows them to capture as many attendees as possible.



SIGNATURE DMC, A DMC Network Company

Buenos Aires, Argentina
www.signature-dmc.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Eduardo Tuite

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 15

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$1.5 million

Capabilities: Offices in Argentina and Chile and also operate in most South American countries: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Signature DMC has more than 20 years in the market.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: BCD Pfizer 2021; Odans 2021; Girls in Travel 2021.

Trends to Watch: An Increase in hybrid events, 2023 the year of international events.



ULTIMATE VENTURES, A DMC Network Company

Dallas, TX
www.uvdmc.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Laurie Sprouse, CITE, CMP, DMCP, President

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 50

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$2.5 million

Capabilities: As Dallas-Fort Worth destination experts for nearly 30 years, the Ultimate Ventures (UV) team keeps its focus on North Texas exclusively. By building deep vendor relationships, destination knowledge, and unmatched expertise that comes with intense geographic focus, the team can create unique award-winning events and execute flawless complex transportation programs for its clients. UV is women-owned and the only ADMEI accredited DMC (i.e., ADMC) in North Texas.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: With COVID-19 government-mandated capacity limits making the originally contracted city unworkable, the team found itself on the receiving end of a 900-person "Hail Mary" annual meeting. This multi-faceted three-day program (including multiple offsite and onsite events, transportation, six tours, shopping shuttles, and VIP airport transfers) had to be proposed, planned, and executed within less than 90 days. The company provided interactive events and activities that promoted togetherness and fun after a long year of quarantine. Another noteworthy program was for a three-day, two-wave meeting in which the team transformed an underground ballroom into a field of wildflowers, simultaneously creating two separate events in the same room, with different ambiances for day and night. The "cherry on top" was the fact that the client won an industry award for planning and executing the most unique meeting of the year as voted on by their attendees.

Trends to Watch: Between variants, live events are back!

\$5 MILLION TO \$10 MILLION ANNUAL REVENUE



ADVANTAGE DESTINATION & MEETING SERVICES

North Miami Beach, FL
www.advantagedms.com

Top Officer: Jim Post, President and Owner

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 225 to 250

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$5.6 million

Capabilities: Based in South Florida for nearly 25 years, Advantage DMS serves a variety of destinations in the Sunshine State including Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Palm Beach, Boca Raton, Orlando, Marco Island, and Naples.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: In September of 2021, Advantage DMS successfully executed the single largest Incentive Program in the company's history! This six-wave, 25-night Incentive Program featured 3,000+ participants, three yacht charters, 12 DJs, 12 onsite décor events, and six offsite dine-around experiences during this massive logistical endeavor. To be able to operate this during such a challenging time was a huge compliment to the clients' faith in the company.

Trends to Watch: We see increased spending based upon pent up demand for live events after two years of cancellations and virtual. We predict a record-breaking year of events and per program spend. We see live events being the focus of 2022 and 2023.



CE GROUP, A DMC Network Company

San Antonio, TX
www.cegroupinc.net

Top Officer Name & Title: Janet Holliday, President/CEO

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 30 to 40

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$5 million

Capabilities: CE DMC provides a higher level of interactive and one-of-a-kind experiences with a value that lasts long after an event is over. The company takes pride in solving destination management needs, such as organizing a company's arrivals, departures and transportation; managing meeting and hospitality services; coordinating specialty tours and activities, including dine-arounds; directing entertainment and décor; planning innovative teambuilding events; and executing flawless event logistics from start to finish.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: The NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament 2021 hosted an entire 64 team tournament, culminating with the Final Four. CE Group created a vibrant calendar of custom virtual and hybrid offerings curated for players with a goal to

bring the city, stage, studio, park, gym, and food hall to players by way of virtual experiences, from musical performances and workouts, to cooking demos, chalk talks and cultural activities.

During the H-E-B Excellence in Education: Texas Loves Teacher's Tour '21, CE Group caravanned across Texas visiting 50 schools within 50 days and hosting an appreciation event at each stop for school staff complete with food, giveaways, prizes.

Trends to Watch: The trends for 2022 are all about going back to live events that focus on safe but highly engaging attendee experiences. Emphasis will be on compelling, sensory and celebratory connection. Technology and hybrid elements will continue to play a role with content and touchless high impact deliverables. In-person gatherings are the goal and making them memorable is the trend.

CORINTHIAN EVENTS

Boston, MA
www.corinthianevents.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Courtney Church, Co-Founder & Partner and Jill Tate, Co-Founder & Partner

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 180

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$6 million; \$11 million in 2019

Capabilities: With over 20 years serving Boston and New England, clients get the most out of New England by working with Corinthian Events. While Boston, MA and Newport, RI are specialty markets, the reach extends to all corners of New England. Corinthian Events specializes in site selection, dine-around coordination, custom excursions and unique tours, team building, activities and outings, incentive programs, offsite dinners, unique venues, and more.

17TH ANNUAL DMC SPOTLIGHT

Noteworthy Programs/Events in

2021: A four-day conference in the heart of Boston where employees from all around the country flew to the city for lectures, a formal dinner, nightly dine-arounds, team building activities, and themed parties and celebrations; an annual awards gala for a company with branches all over New England, they used Boston as the hub of the event and the team provided afternoon activities, a formal dinner, the awards presentation, honorary speakers, and overnight accommodations.

A corporate Oktoberfest-style party for a client looking for one last company celebration before the winter months, the gathering included transportation, dine-arounds, the main party, and accommodations; a four-day pharmaceutical meeting with airport transportation, dine-arounds, offsite dinners, and design needs; a multi-day conference with group activities, transportation, and accommodations.

Trends to Watch: The biggest trend in events is the inclusion of hybrid offerings in some capacity at every event. In 2021, mandates and travel restrictions made offering a hybrid or virtual option for remote attendees imperative. Moving forward, these hybrid options may not be forced by rules and mandates, but they are still going to be necessary to make all of our guests feel comfortable. Those who are uncomfortable attending in-person will be happy that they have a hybrid option, and those that do attend in-person will feel comfortable that risk was mitigated by that same hybrid option.

DESTINATION MUSICK CITY, A DMC Network Company

Nashville, TN

www.destinationmusickcity.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Valerie Summers, VP & Queen of Everything

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 300

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$5.5 million

Capabilities: Celebrating seven years in the DMC business, with a 40-year history in live event production with its parent company, Gary Musick Productions, Destination Musick City is a one-stop shop with its own décor and props, as well as production equipment. Additionally, the company has a fabrication shop so if they don't already have it, they can make it.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: Journeys Sales Meeting, June 2021; ACDI, October 2021; Virgin Hotels, 2021.

Trends to Watch: Hybrid meetings are with us to stay for a bit. We're forecasting clients will want to spend more money on immersive activations, enticing corporate brands to engage more.



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IVI DMC ENTERPRISES

Cancun, Mexico

www.ividmc.travel

Top Officer Name & Title: Jose-Manuel Garcia, Visionary, Founder & Seller of Dreams

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 150

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$5 million

Capabilities: Since 1986, IVI DMC Enterprises has provided full destination services for incentives, meetings, and ad-hoc events at

more than 41 destinations in six Latin American countries (Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Panama, and Colombia). Management notes its own Quality System based on the ISO 9001 standards, full-coverage liability insurance, safety and security programs, plus helping the local communities through its Foundation Amigos of the Planet. IVI DMC Enterprises is a proud Hosts Global Member.

Noteworthy Programs/Events

in 2021: The team in Los Cabos handled planning and logistics for a program of almost 1,000 participants in February of 2021, with a flawless operation and all guests returning to the U.S. with negative COVID tests. The team in Puerto Vallarta, together with Amigos of the Planet Foundation, planned a CSR event for a "Casa Hogar" where the client donated a playground, and the participants assembled boxes with goods for the children and their families.

Trends to Watch: Clients today are looking for more events with the corporate social responsibility component as well as authentic experiences in which they can learn about the culture of destination. We are also seeing a more specific focus on wellness activities that also include being in contact with nature.



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PREFERRED DMCs

Barcelona, Spain

www.preferred-dmcs.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Marc Schwabach, DMCP

Average Number of Programs/

Events Per Year: 500

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$5 million

Capabilities: A boutique consortium of select, independent, and highly-qualified European DMCs provide global sales and marketing support to its members. Members are recruited by invitation-only and must have ADMEI membership, be well-established, and have strong reputations, and hold certification or accreditation.

Trends to Watch: We see consolidation of the event industry after the pandemic and see ourselves in a prime position to serve high profile clients from all over the world in a personalized way, all over Europe.



SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE PLANNERS, A DMC Network Company

Scottsdale, AZ

www.southwestconferenceplanners.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Jim

Lammy, president

Average Number of Programs/

Events Per Year: 450,000+

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$8 million

Capabilities: Southwest Conference Planners has been planning events for clients in Arizona since 1986. This year marks its 36th year of business as Arizona's DMC. "SWCP" has

become a well-known nickname in the industry among trusted vendors, valued partners, and exceptional clients. Southwest Conference Planners takes great pride when it comes to creating a perfect Arizona experience. The following is a list of services including, but is not limited to, tours and activities, entertainment, event design, teambuilding, transportation, staffing, restaurant management, off-property events, photography, videography, and more!

Noteworthy Programs/Events

in 2021: In 2021, Southwest Conference Planners was lucky enough to welcome 479 programs to Arizona. Some of the most noteworthy include: HOKA Race—helped transport and quarantine

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approximately 200 athletes and staff where they took the 100K world-record in Chandler, AZ in January 2021.

FICP Annual Conference: the team transformed the pool at the JW Marriott Desert Ridge into the four elements to host over 500 financial planners in the finance and insurance industries.

LPL Financial: the team simultaneously orchestrated two full event setups on property at the Scottsdale Fairmont Princess Resort so a group of 900 attendees could socially distance without losing the integrity and design of the conference. The team successfully executed this in two separate waves of the program—in November 2021 and in December 2021.

Lincoln International hosted 20 executives for a truly unique dining experience at the new Christopher's Restaurant at the Wrigley Mansion where guests received a customized tasting menu caviar served out of a porcelain hand.

Trends to Watch: We believe that the biggest trend(s) in the event industry will be "coming back together." We hear it repeatedly from our planners with large corporations that they want to bring live events back, as they simply are not getting the return they desire with virtual meetings. We are currently experiencing some of the busiest months in our company history. Our hotel partners and vendors have all blacked out days of availability due to the volume we are seeing. We are also predicting there will be a huge rise in giving back locally—not only with corporate givebacks to the community, but by utilizing only local companies and products. The experiences at our events will be customized and designed for attendees, tying directly back to our local community, while telling a story throughout the duration of their conference.



TERRAEVENTS, A DMC Network Company

Milan, Italy

www.terraevents.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Lorenzo Pignatti DMCP, Founder & President

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 300-400 (pre-COVID)

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$7.5 million (50% drop for COVID)

Capabilities: TERRAEVENTS is one of Europe's largest privately owned multi-destination DMCs with more than 10 offices in key destinations in Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal. Established in Italy in 2010, TERRAEVENTS has become one of the local market's leaders, setting the foundations for the international development that started in 2015. TERRAEVENTS is a full-service destination management company which delivers classic services to the MICE industry such as transportation, staffing, activities, and tours together with others which are more specific like staging, A/V production, content management, and experience curation. TERRAEVENTS has so far successfully served more than 3,000 corporate and agency clients from all over the world, with the U.S., Canada, Australia, South Africa, UK, and Germany being the most relevant source markets.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: 2021 was complicated due to the pandemic which greatly limited the possibility of organizing events and incentive programs, but the company managed to deliver successful events in Portugal, Italy, and Spain. These events included: an Association's annual conference for 400 people in Lisbon for four days with tours, activities, offsite dinners,

and a spectacular gala dinner with tailor-made entertainment production; a corporate sales meeting in Venice for 100 guests featuring a special activity developed exclusively for this client to discover the city through the eyes of the local artisans, and closing with an unforgettable farewell dinner in a palace on the Grand Canal; an incentive program for a German corporate client in Sardinia which was limited in size but extremely challenging and interesting as the company had to produce new and creative outdoor activities and experiences to meet the client's requirements dictated by COVID's restrictions.

Trends to Watch: We firmly believe the incentive programs will have a huge rebound after the pandemic and these cannot be substituted with any virtual activity or experience. Corporate meetings and conventions will come back a bit slower as they may still be delivered in a virtual or at least hybrid version for a couple of years, but the need for human interaction and the benefits it brings to the ROE and ROI of events is unquestionable. Training and education programs on the other hand may not come back to their in-person versions, sizes, and frequency since technology has evolved rapidly providing cost-effective and efficient alternative solutions.



TERRAMAR, A DMC Network Company

Los Cabos, Mexico

www.terrarmardestinations.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Sunny Irvine, owner

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 200

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$8 million

Capabilities: Terramar is a full-service event, destination, conference, and meeting services company that has been in operation since 1994. Terramar's wide range of services and legacy in the meetings and events industry in Mexico, Panama, and the U.S. ensure delivering the best for clients. Despite the pandemic, expansion in the U.S. market continued with the addition of Arrangements Unlimited Terramar, recognized for providing custom-designed, creative, innovative, and logistically seamless programs in San Diego, Orange County, and Palm Springs. With offices in three different countries and as members of the DMC Network, Terramar has built impeccable relationships with return clientele and local vendors.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in

2021: While 2021 presented many challenges and opportunities across the industry, the team at Terramar DMC celebrated many wins along the way including the expansion into San Diego and Orange County and a record year for their Tahoe office. One notable win for the Terramar team was the execution of a multi-wave incentive program that was originally booked in Los Cabos and had to be relocated to Lake Tahoe, NV. After over a year of planning and multiple site visits to Cabo for the program, it was relocated from a beach destination to a mountain town heading into winter season with less than six weeks notice. The Terramar Cabo team worked closely with the Tahoe office to ensure a seamless transition of the client's needs, preferences, and program objectives. The trip was the absolute opposite of what the group had originally envisioned, but the attendees loved every minute. The short booking window presented its own challenges, but the hotel and

vendors helped the Terramar team to curate unique activities and dining experiences for the group.

Trends to Watch: Those destinations that eased restrictions to visitors and events overall, while reinforcing health and safety protocols, succeeded during these difficult times. Clients are eager to meet and connect in-person again, and we are providing ways of doing that in a safe environment. Our Mexico destinations, together with Lake Tahoe, have been extremely busy and forecast a great end of 2022, as well as a very strong 2023. The value of a DMC has been proven now more than ever, with flexibility and adaptability becoming the top attributes to consider.

\$10 MILLION TO \$20 MILLION ANNUAL REVENUE



DestinationConceptsinc

A GLOBAL DMC PARTNER

DESTINATION CONCEPTS INC., A Global DMC Partner

San Diego, CA

www.destinationconcepts.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Brynne Frost, CEO

Average Number of Programs/ Events Per Year: 1,500

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$13.14 million (2022 is off the charts!)

Capabilities: DCi was founded in 1998, and for 24 years its services have evolved organically to deliver all that its clients need for exceptional event experiences. It

has built the largest on-the-ground team, while maintaining a boutique-minded approach. With service segments spanning destination management, event design and production, logistical meeting management, experiential agency services, and gifting and fulfillment, DCi aligns its team to match its client's custom needs. Its creativity and logistical skills have helped its clients excel within in-person, hybrid, and virtual event formats across all meeting types from incentives to tradeshow to product launches. From exclusive C-suite meetings to citywide conventions for 20,000+ attendees, the team has the bandwidth and flexibility to do it all. DCi has succeeded in becoming a dependable resource for clients across industries by leveraging unique capabilities such as an in-house Design Team, in-house Entertainment Manager, exclusive Design Studio, and virtual studio spaces. DCi is a team of innovators always looking ahead for creative solutions that get to a "yes" for its clients and deliver engaging experiences for their attendees.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in

2021: DCi produced 188 programs composed of multiple events of all sizes and scope. Two favorites include: an automotive client's conference for dealers, corporate employees, vendors, and their guests in Anaheim, CA. The 1,800 high-level attendees necessitated the very best in offerings and each element had to align with the company's eco-minded values. Highlights included a custom photo-op with brand ambassadors, The Barkleys; transportation for 1,800 attendees; design and production of the Welcome Dinner at the Grand Plaza, including eco-minded design solutions and product placement; the first-ever buyout of the Anaheim Packing District/Farmers Park for an offsite evening event.

A financial summit in Ojai, CA for 400 attendees which included a series of onsite events all produced on property. This program demanded a creative theme, strategic use of space, budget management, and perfect execution of all deliverables. From creative to production, the team worked in tandem to design and produce this event which hit on all client touch points and created a beautiful experience for attendees. Custom structures created intimate spaces on vast lawns where thoughtfully selected décor and lush floral installations delivered the theme in the most beautiful way.

Trends to Watch: Outdoor venues are going to be very much in-demand and utilized for all event formats from casual welcomes to formal recognition events. Clients will want to see large-scale productions that normally take place inside executed to perfection in outdoor spaces. In late 2021, our team produced four nights of events in all outdoor locations ranging from a food and wine festival to a stunning gala for 1,400 attendees. By holding the event outdoors, we accommodated all rules and regulations and most importantly, made the attendees feel safe so they could enjoy themselves. In terms of event and meeting content, we are seeing a trend towards empowerment and gratitude. Companies are looking to give their team members a morale boost and create experiences that bring them together, build confidence in the future, and promote retention. This can be delivered with speakers, activities, mindful gatherings, and/or personalized gifting. When companies show they care about their team members, it leads to an increase in retention and engagement.



IMPRINT EVENTS GROUP, A DMC Network Company

Denver, CO

www.imprintgroup.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Nicole Marsh, CMP, DMCP Chris Starkey, and Adriane Hodder (Partners)

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 1,000

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$13 million

Capabilities: In business since 1969, Imprint Events Group has offices in Colorado, Florida and Las Vegas. It is a full-service DMC that also offers in-house creative, production, entertainment and experiential design services to clients gathering across the country. Imprint takes pride in creating events with identity, there is nothing cookie-cutter about their approach. The team boasts over 600 years combined experience which allows it to look at each event, experience, or challenge with a unique angle in providing what's best for the client's specific goals and objectives.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: Teams stayed busy in 2021, especially in the second half of the year, producing more events than in the same period of 2019. It began the year with several large virtual conferences, transitioned to hybrid programs mid-year as well as unique incentives in remote resort locations to play it safe. The year ended with producing a large-scale conference/tradeshow, record-breaking public festivals, and numerous corporate meetings gathering in-person once again.

Trends to Watch: We will continue to see virtual and hybrid events for the next one to two years. Clients with audiences around the world or across the country have enjoyed the convenience of gathering virtually.

It may not be right for every client or for every meeting, but we see it sticking around for some time. Those planning in-person gatherings will be slow to officially contract or will be planning last minute to avoid possible cancellations as we continue to navigate the effect variants have on live meetings and events.

metroConnections

METROCONNECTIONS

Minneapolis, MN

www.metroconnections.com

Top Officer Name & Title: David Graves, CEO

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 750

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$15 million

Capabilities: metroConnections creates conference and event experiences both in-person and virtually. As a provider of conference, event and stage production, and transportation solutions for over 35 years, they serve the corporate and association market.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: Renewal by Anderson Virtual Annual Retailer Summit; QVC & HSN Virtual Beauty Bash Winnebago Leadership Summit (In-person); Patterson Dental Summit Incentive Trip (In-Person); NBC Universal Registration Programs; Labcorp Virtual Symposiums.

Trends to Watch: As we are seeing a transition back to in-person programming, we continue to see a need for streaming content to virtual audiences. We also see a continued trend in further engagement at in-person programs but created in a safe environment. We are seeing large brands moving forward with their annual conferences and events to try and reach their audiences that have been working from home these past few years.

OVER \$20 MILLION IN REVENUE ANNUALLY



360 DESTINATION GROUP

Irvine, CA

www.360dg.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Shelly Archer and Trevor Hanks, Managing Partners

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 300

(2020 and 2021)

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$20 million

Capabilities: 360 Destination Group has been a top DMC since 1978. 360 has deep destination intel and offers services throughout California, Florida, Texas, Arizona, Las Vegas, Chicago, and New York. The teams are experts in event design and development, digital services (virtual and hybrid events), team building, entertainment, transportation and shuttle services, dine-arounds, registration and hospitality, activities and tours, and off-property venues.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: Sky's The Limit: Front row for SpaceX Launch for 500 guests. The team organized a full launch view experience in Cocoa Beach, Florida, organizing and booking two days of launch viewing in case there was a launch delay. Operationally speaking, this program was full of incredible challenges and fantastic feats. When it was contracted, the day of the launch or even the launch time—were estimated. The mighty operations team called every day for three weeks to get launch details. The shuttle window was

nailed down only 72 hours prior to the public knowing. All vendors, staff, and transportation had to be prepared for anything, as details were continually changing from NASA and the SpaceX Team. The event was nothing short of a success and SpaceX and it was truly an experience of a lifetime!

Versace, Versace, Versace!: A beautiful summer in Miami with over 800 people in attendance. Two waves of 400 guests were able to enjoy five beautiful days/nights each, starting each wave off with an authentic Havana Nights, enjoying a cigar roller, a Coco Frio station, and their very own Bodega! Every guest left with a hat and a dress or shirt to enjoy during the trip! They had to choose from two full days of activities; one of their nights consisted of 12 dine-around options giving them the authentic dining experience in Little Havana and South Beach! With one overlapping evening, about 800 guests enjoyed dinner in celebration to end their event, and for some to start theirs—with the one and only John Legend! To top it off, about 100 of the guests enjoyed a VIP dinner at the Versace Mansion!

Trends to Watch: Trends, you ask? At 360DG, we're trend setters so you can bet we're pushing the boundaries on developing technology integrations into live events! Using RFID bracelets to cause a speakeasy door to open when you come within range or using a kinetic wall to change patterns as you move along an exhibit. We're making the connection between human movement and technological reaction to create a surprise WOW moment like never before!

CSI DMC

Washington, DC

www.csi-dmc.com

Top Officer Name & Title: David Hainline, CEO

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 650 to 750

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$35 million to \$45 million

Capabilities: CSI DMC is the destination and event management company clients trust to design and deliver exceptional in-person, hybrid, and virtual experiences with logistical precision. Established in 1987, it thrives on creating one-of-a-kind activations that turn moments into memories. Core strengths include innovative special events, production, custom tours, team building, gifting, meeting management, transportation, and staffing. CSI DMC's capabilities are powered by a collaborative team of event professionals located across the U.S. Regional hubs are Washington, DC, Baltimore, Boston, Newport, Florida, Nashville, Texas, Chicago, Colorado, Las Vegas, California, and globally in partnership with CSI International.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: Producing an 8,000-person gathering in San Diego rich with unique activations, amazing entertainment, and strict safety protocols allowed the team to stretch their creativity and demonstrate logistical excellence. Delivering a 3,500-person winter celebration in Boston that transitioned to an outdoor street festival with over 50 vendors, complex city restrictions, and only six weeks to plan allowed the team to demonstrate destination expertise, collaborate deeply, and excel. Creating a stunning incentive program for 275 executives in Miami, featuring delectable culinary experiences, one-of-a-kind gifting, and a private

polo match was challenging and amazing. But sometimes the most noteworthy events of all were the hugs. The tears and the smiles. Clients, colleagues, vendors, friends. Everyone came together, looked after each other, and made the magic happen together.

Trends to Watch: 2022 is the year to take every tool we learned from 2020–2021 and apply it intelligently to our updated palette. As an industry, we've survived a blow we never saw coming. There have been a lot of casualties, plenty of movement, and loads of creativity. Remaining nimble and continuing to evolve is key. The one constant remains that together we can always find the way to connect, collaborate, inspire, and celebrate.

HELLO! DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Orlando, FL

www.hello-dmc.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Paul Mears, III President & CEO

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 4,800

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$40 million

Capabilities: Hello! is a family-owned business founded in 1986 with three generations of experience in the hospitality industry. The owners are directly involved in the day-to-day business, engaged with clients, and fully invested in the long-term success of the company. This family-owned but professionally-managed approach will continue to help Hello! excel in its competitive set and evolve with the ever-changing demands of clients and industry. Through decades of experience, proven processes, and creative

solutions, Hello! builds relationships that inspire confidence and encourage fun. From the first Hello! to the final exclamation, its passion is creating experiences in 40+ destinations coast-to-coast operating from 10 local offices.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in

2021: In 2021, Hello! combined the virtual event experience gained in 2020 to produce multiple successful hybrid events, combining in-person experiences with a national reach. Notable programs included a hybrid conference for a medical company filmed in Las Vegas in front of a wrap-around 60-foot LED wall, with Hello! producing the content, managing the flow, and broadcasting to remote attendees. 2021 also saw a return to larger in-person events, working together with our hotel and supplier partners to ease guests back into live events safely. In line with guidelines in many of our destinations, Hello! produced multiple large-scale events at iconic off-property event spaces in our destinations, including aboard the USS Midway in San Diego and large tent installations in multiple destinations. In 2021, Hello! also opened its newest destination in New York City and has successfully operated multiple programs since its launch.

Trends to Watch: As we head into 2022, companies are looking for ways to reward and celebrate their employees while being respectful of the ongoing pandemic. In today's challenging job market, companies hope to retain and attract top talent by offering flexible work conditions and attractive perks. Live and hybrid events will continue to be a driving force in employee engagement, with in-person meetings a key tool

to pull workers from their screens and to infuse company culture and connectivity in our increasingly remote world. In 2022 and beyond, pandemic-era tweaks will become permanent event features, focusing on high-impact with low-touch. Watch for innovative food service methods that limit touch points and maximize presentation, as well as a greater focus on an event's sustainability and impact on the environment and local community. With many companies and large tradeshows meeting in-person for the first time in two years, companies are looking to return to in-person in big ways, focusing on branding that connects attendees, encourages them to be present in the moment and organic ways to foster attendee networking and engagement. Look for technology to be a tool that continues to innovate the industry in service of the development of real human connection.

LIBERTY INTERNATIONAL TOURISM GROUP

Vaduz, Liechtenstein

www.liberty-int.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Mario Enzesberger, CEO, Founder & President

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 1,000+ on average per year

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$25 million in 2021 (\$100+ million in 2019)

Capabilities: Global footprint: Liberty International Tourism Group (LITG) has proprietary offices in about 50 countries, which delivers DMC services to about 90+ countries worldwide covering all continents. Local expertise: each LITG local office is run with local incoming

experts. Global buying power: LITG has global partnership agreements with main international hotel chains as well as local agreements with local hotel chains. Global reach: LITG has a team of dedicated sales representatives in over 20 major source markets covering all continents. Global tailor-made services: LITG operates in the fields of MICE, Premium Leisure, Sports Hospitality, Cruise Ground Handling, Virtual & Hybrid Events and Aircraft Solutions. Financial strength: LITG is privately owned, financially stable, and profitable since its inception in 1991. Global synergies: LITG offices, thanks to our internal technology software, our mutual cooperation across borders and our majority owned structure, work in close cooperation with each other to cater for the needs of their international clients travelling with us. Global partnerships: LITG has signed Preferred DMC partnerships with some of the major global and local TMC, event and incentive agencies across the globe.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: In 2020 and 2021, due to COVID-19, the focus has been to help clients postpone or even cancel their events with zero to limited financial damages. This resulted in a very encouraging prospective year 2022. However, in 2021, the team managed to maintain some significant international events at our destinations, when conditions allowed them.

Trends to Watch: DMC expertise will regain momentum, to assist and support international clients with flexible contracts, health and safety regulations, and possible onsite emergency responses. Sustainability has become a key element in the

decision-making factor of large international corporations. Despite virtual and hybrid solutions, the eagerness for travel is stronger than ever and whenever clients can organize international incentive or meetings, they will go for it.

OVATION GLOBAL DMC

Geneva, Switzerland

www.ovationdmc.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Sebastien Tondeur, CEO

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 2,000

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$250 million

Capabilities: Ovation Global DMC provides destination consultancy, event design, and event planning for agencies, associations, and corporations. It has been servicing associations, corporations, and agencies in 100+ destinations throughout Europe, Middle East, Africa, Asia, North America and South America for more than 30 years. With extensive local expertise, creativity, and resources it specializes in designing and executing event objectives from logistics to exclusive high-end programs.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: 184 virtual and hybrid programs throughout the world, 568 in-person events in 88 countries, and collaboration with 72 of The Fortune 500 companies.

Trends to Watch: Uncertainty in international travel for events will continue well into 2022. Sustainable event practices will be mandated very soon. Decrease in number of event attendees, increase in number of events. Hybrid event teams will create more flexibility for clients and partners.



PRA

www.pra.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Mike Fiber, Chief Executive Officer

Average Number of Programs/Events Per Year: 2,000

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$150 to \$200 million

Capabilities: PRA proudly operates in the Southeast, Northeast, Midwest, Southwest and Northwest regions with 29 locations to serve clients in any destination. For over 40 years, PRA has created extraordinary business experiences with complete confidence, empowered by a holistic approach to event design, which delivers integrated, end-to-end solutions that are anchored in strategy, conceived with creativity, produced with excellence and delivered authentically. PRA amplifies the impact of events and communications through collaboration with clients and partners to produce results that move businesses forward, whether in-person or digital.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in 2021: From digital experiences to in-person events, PRA is thrilled to see attendees gathering again. Most recently, PRA worked with a global management consulting firm, bringing together top-level employees for its North American partner meeting focused on togetherness. Following strict health and safety protocols PRA created an immersive program set to celebrate achievements and highlight the best of the authentic destination

experiences at some of the most iconic venues in the nation's capital. PRA also had an opportunity to partner with the largest third-party incentive company in the world to deliver its annual event which brought together 500 people who represented the entire meetings ecosystem. PRA delivered highly immersive activations, engaging décor with local touches infused throughout the space, an innovative welcome night reception featuring an authentic marketplace, an off-property event featuring a museum of pop culture, destination activities, and transportation. PRA was involved actively within the experience

design at every turn, resulting in an overwhelmingly successful event. **Trends to Watch:** The biggest shift in our industry has been the need for elevated strategy and creative design approach at the DMC level. Clients and third parties recognize the critical role DMCs play in furthering their business goals and strategy. The attendee experience in both digital and physical platforms has evolved. Now more than ever, it is important that we redefine what creative means to events, and the approach we take, to create engaging experiences that connect us. Business events stretch beyond physical environments, resulting

in a wider, larger audience we need to consider when creating settings for deep connections. Events must be designed first by looking through the lens of the attendees—factoring in needs, how the audience will think and feel, and what they will do when they experience face-to-face or digital event experiences. This requires design competencies and alignment with suppliers able to adapt to new business models. In addition, as face-to-face meetings re-emerge, the social impact of events will be a major focus. The industry will see more localized events, with corporate social responsibility being



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OVER 30 YEARS IN BUSINESS & OVER 30 DESTINATIONS.
IT'S GOOD TO HAVE CONNECTIONS!

RMC

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WWW.RMCDMC.COM

more prevalent than ever before, as companies will be drawn to supporting local communities with locally sourced goods and services. As we continue to shape and evolve business events, PRA is focusing the passionate minds and hearts of our people on finding solutions that help move our industry forward.



RMC: RESORTS | MOUNTAINS | CITIES

Aspen, CO

www.rmcdmc.com

Top Officer Name & Title: Shawn Thomson, CEO & Owner

**Average Number of Programs/
Events Per Year:** 475

Estimated 2021 Revenue: \$28.4 million

Capabilities: RMC is the largest individually owned destination management company in North America. Over the past 32 years, RMC has grown from its first location in Aspen to an extensive network of more than 30 destinations across the U.S., providing premier event-management services to a distinguished clientele of corporate and incentive groups, associations, travel, and meeting planners. As exclusive hotel partners of Four Seasons, Montage, St. Regis, The Ritz-Carlton, and other Marriott Luxury Properties, RMC offers unforgettable experiences at dream destinations and resorts throughout North America. RMC's acclaimed services include creating, planning, and executing signature décor events; designing teambuilding activities; organizing

ground transportation and local logistics; custom-designed unique VIP experiences; and more. RMC's destinations include Aspen, Beaver Creek, Vail, Denver, Colorado Springs, Lake Tahoe, Park City, Salt Lake City, Napa, Sonoma, Healdsburg, Savannah, Charleston, Bluffton, Big Sky, Jackson Hole, Santa Barbara, and Santa Fe.

Noteworthy Programs/Events in

2021: Aspen at Dunbar Ranch:

The RMC Aspen team operated a client program with a custom Day at the Ranch experience at one of its favorite private ranches, owned by Oscar winner, Kevin Costner. Guests were able to take part in the adventure of their choice, which included fly fishing, hiking, open-air Jeep tours, and even a baseball game on Kevin's own 'Field of Dreams.' Activities were followed by a gourmet dinner, with Ranch-style entertainment consisting of a microbrew beer tasting, wolf meet-and-greet, and a country-western music duo.

Denver at The Gaylord Rockies:

The RMC Denver team operated a stunning event for a client at the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center. And what made it even more remarkable is that the team executed this intricate event four times, for a back-to-back, four-wave program! Both Gaylord's indoor and outdoor spaces were completely transformed to represent a different Colorado season. Winter showcased Colorado's snowy, mountain majesty (complete with indoor ice rink), along with the warmth of a cozy ski lodge. Spring had bright colors and florals on display, along with a giant flower wall and a flower crown-making station! Outside featured a stunning, teepee tent which split the event lawn in half—one side summer, showcasing wildflower centerpieces

and a rafting photobooth, while the other side showed off the splendor of fall, complete with axe throwing!

Park City at Montage Deer Valley:

Montage Deer Valley and RMC collaborated on the ultimate French dining experience. Bundles of lavender surrounded the guest tables and provided a soothing, aromatic experience. Fresh ferns were suspended over the tables on custom pallet trays. Stoneware plates, lavender seed paper menus, and a stunning floral entrance all tied the design together, to provide an evening to remember!

Trends to Watch: We operated an amazing number of programs in 2021, and unfortunately, Omicron has put a damper in 2022's first quarter. We're confident that large-scale events will be more prevalent later in the year, with the warm summer months. But we also think that smaller, more intimate events will continue to grow in popularity, for both ease of following health protocols, as well as creating stronger engagement and connection that people missed out on (and have been craving) since the pandemic started. We think planners will continue to seek out and lean on DMC professionals for our local expertise to help navigate the ever-changing landscape of state and local county COVID protocols. ●

NOTE: All information here is supplied by the companies listed and was current at press time. Should you be on this list next year? Complete our survey by clicking [here](#).

Maximize Your Conference Experience with a 3-Step Measurement Plan



By Christie Osborne

Attending a conference is an enriching experience but one that often leaves business owners overwhelmed by information overload. By the time you pack your bags to head home, you've explored business seminars, sat in breakouts, taken notes on upcoming trends, and highlighted new techniques to adopt upon your return home.

While you may step off the plane eager to apply everything you've learned, the excitement fades when you sit down at your desk and realize you have no idea where to start. So instead, you dive back into your everyday work and file your conference education to collect dust.

Of course, that's not the best use of your investment. You dedicate time and money attending a conference, so the experience must provide a return on your investment beyond a brief business vacation.

Astute marketers don't wait until *after* a conference to measure value and follow through with their takeaways. Instead, they actively evaluate every seminar to get a clear picture of what's worth taking home and how to apply it best.

If you want to bring this strategy to your next conference, all you need to do is ask three questions of each session you attend:

❑ **What stage does this represent in the customer journey?**

Breaking down the customer journey defines how you'll measure the success of new marketing activities at each stage. Prospective clients ready to pull the trigger in the booking stage are

positioned to act, but a newly engaged couple fresh off a proposal is likely focused on filling their Pinterest board with inspiration.

For instance, if you sit in a seminar about using Instagram Reels to highlight behind-the-scenes moments or common problems clients make, you're learning about the inspiration and research stages of event planning. While the customer is thinking of design and gathering information to make shrewd decisions, you can begin establishing authority with meaningful content that supports the design and research stages.

For this exercise, write down the stage associated with each educational seminar you attend. Then, move on to the next question.

❑ **What is the best way to measure success in this customer journey stage?**

Success looks different at each stage of your customer journey. For example, your close rate reflects the performance of your booking stage whereas your number of inquiries signifies how well you're reaching leads in the inspiration and research stages.

Using the Instagram Reels example above, the education is tailored toward the initial stages of planning. Thus, it's not realistic to expect people to reach out about availability or options. You aren't guiding them to book your services yet. You're simply sharing valuable information for them to make the best decision when the time comes to hire a planner.

In this case, it's perfectly reasonable to look at vanity metrics

Astute marketers don't wait until after a conference to measure value and follow through with their takeaways. Instead, they actively evaluate every seminar to get a clear picture of what's worth taking home and how to apply it best.



like the number of views, likes, and comments. While these metrics may not be actionable, they demonstrate engagement with your content and the ability to establish the Know, Like, Trust factor for later stages in their customer journey.

On the other hand, if you're attending a seminar about sales strategies (the booking stage, in other words), you'd measure success through your conversion rate.

❑ **How will I call my audience to action and deepen the brand relationship?**

The final question you must ask is how you can facilitate your prospect's transition to the next stage of the customer journey. If someone is in the research stage, how will you guide them to the booking stage? What is the next logical step in your funnel?

If they're in the inspiration stage, you'll want to strengthen the relationship with your brand. You might invite them to follow you on social media and like your content to help the algorithm serve relevant content. Perhaps you create a specially-curated link in your bio or a highlights reel that encourages them to binge on your move from design to research.

Or, if the next logical step is to begin vetting you and your competitors, you might create a Reel that outlines your services and showcases how you've helped other clients avoid problems and produce outstanding results.

How you call your audience to action will determine how you measure success, so be sure your CTA is relevant and directs them to the next logical step.

A few days jam-packed with educational takeaways is enough to cause decision paralysis, but here's the thing: You don't need to do all the things all the time.

Walking out of a conference knowing how to measure success for each strategy, technique, or tool allows you to implement what you've learned and measure it right away. For every idea you take home, this quick, lightweight three-step evaluation will provide the information you need to determine whether it works in a short time. Measurement isn't as complicated as it seems; instead, it's a matter of asking and answering the right questions at the right time. And you don't need a laundry list of questions to gather powerful insights, so pack these questions away in your carry-on and save yourself the headaches and heartbreaks before your next conference. ●

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 Catersource + The Special Event, NACE Experience, WIPA, and the ABC Conference.

See Christie Osborne at Catersource + The Special Event

Don't miss any of [Christie Osborne's sessions](#) during Catersource + The Special Event this May.

- **Tuesday, May 3 at 1:15 p.m.:**
Analytics with Impact: Turning Your Data into Action
- **Tuesday, May 3 at 4:00 p.m.:**
Know Thy Numbers: Data-driven Marketing for Caterers (CS)
- **Tuesday, May 3 at 2:30 p.m.:**
Time for a Tune-up: Staying competitive with strategic business updates

Get all the details at thespecialeventshow.com.

Why Now is the Time to Automate Your Business Processes

BY JEFF KEAR



If **THE PANDEMIC** has taught us anything, it's that there is no such thing as "business as usual" anymore, especially for those of us in the events and hospitality industry.

We've had to rely on our wits and hustle to survive the last two years. However, as many of us have discovered, those two things alone aren't enough to address the problems that we face, or prepare us for the uncertainties of tomorrow.

Although blaming the pandemic for the many personal and business losses we have suffered is understandable and justifiable, we cannot deny that it has also exposed vulnerabilities in our business practices that have been there all along.

I will be the first to admit that the pandemic has led me to rethink how we run our business.

But it has also compelled me to take a deep look at the challenges many of our venue and catering customers are facing and how they can be addressed.

These challenges include:

Understaffing & staff retention

The Great Resignation has made it near impossible for many businesses to hire enough capable employees, which affects operations and stresses current staff to the point of exhaustion—and quitting.

Handling surges in demand & sustaining growth

A flood of pent-up demand is only a good thing if you have the staff and processes in place to handle it. And once the flood is over, there's the issue of keeping your lead flow consistent and your calendar booked.

Maintaining client satisfaction

Keeping customers happy wasn't always easy in calmer times. But now that you have fewer staff, increased demand and rising prices due to higher fixed costs, keeping customers content and engaged is an even bigger challenge.

Dropping leads and losing sales to competitors

Garden-variety leaks in your sales funnel (like missed follow ups or bad handoffs) can be painful even in "normal" times. But when demand surges, those leaks can grow into full-blown gushers, providing openings for your competitors to usurp your place in the market.

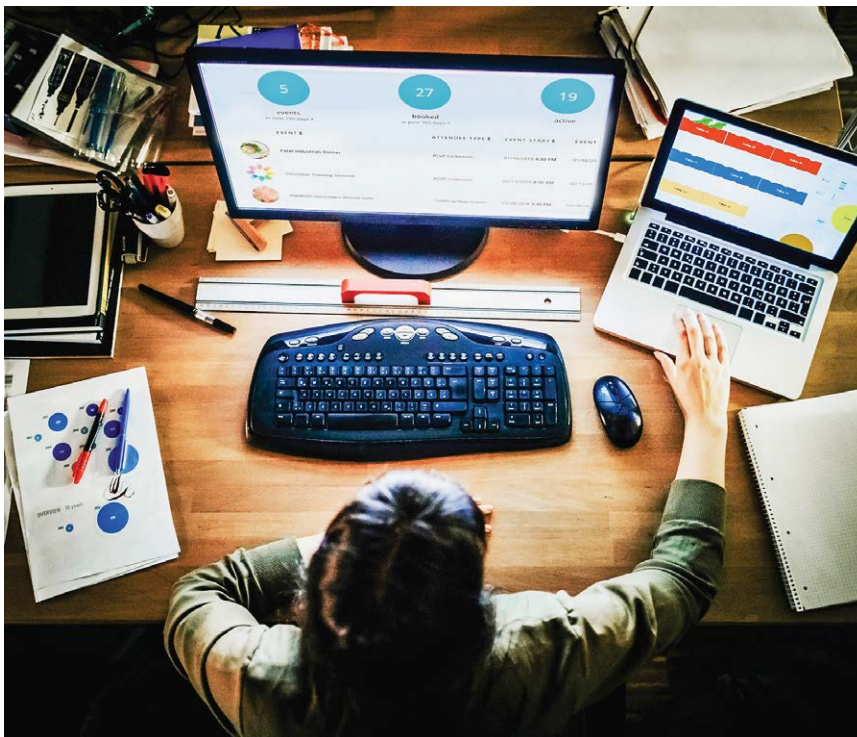
One effective strategy to address these challenges is through business process automation. Although this may sound a bit technical, it is simply about streamlining how you operate so that you and your team can run as lean as possible while optimizing your service to clients.

Let's look at the basic steps in automating business practices.

#1. Identify process bottlenecks and barriers to doing business with you

Do you have any manual processes that require substantial effort for every instance (like creating every proposal from scratch)? Or internal handoffs of information or duties that often get dropped? Internal bottlenecks and broken processes like these can take time away from serving clients and hinder you from growing your business.

“It is simply about streamlining how you operate so that you and your team can run as lean as possible while optimizing your service to clients.”



#2. Centralize data and simplify data entry and access

If your information is scattered across lots of documents, emails, notes, and applications, your business data is vastly harder to organize and keep up-to-date; not to mention virtually impossible to aggregate so that you can see the bigger picture.

Using tools like online software to centralize your data not only addresses these problems head-on, but also standardizes how your staff can enter and access vital information—including remotely.

#3. Create simple, repeatable processes that are easy to train

Standard workflows that are clearly spelled out and automated (like tracking leads and statuses through your pipeline via a CRM tool) and pre-built templates for such things like proposals, contracts and BEOs can go a long way to making sure your staff members maximize their time while accounting for every detail.

#4. Streamline communications internally and with clients

Often the cause of a double-booking, lost lead, or unhappy client is due to something as basic as a missed email or undelivered message. By creating standard communication channels for your staff and establishing common resources (like a single e-calendar for tracking bookings), you can help ensure that no important details or communications go neglected.

#5. Use business intelligence to anticipate problems and opportunities

When all your data is compiled in one place, it's much easier to see the current status of your entire business as well as trends you may need to address. Putting together a system of dashboards and reports keeps you in-the-know at all times.

Try these business automations to help guide your business through the uncharted waters of 2022 and beyond! ●



Jeff Kear is CEO of **Planning Pod**—all-in-one online event and venue management software for managing event bookings, catering and business processes. He enjoys writing and listening to music on vinyl and lives in Denver, CO, with his wife and two lovingly goofy dogs.

Stop by **Planning Pod's booth #703** on Catersource + The Special Event's tradeshow floor May 4 & 5, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Anaheim, CA at the Anaheim Convention Center. To register for this event, go to www.thespecialeventshow.com

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FOOD FOR FÊTES

A Toast to Hinseltown

by Amber Kispert

COCKTAILS HAVE HAD A STORIED PAST IN HOLLYWOOD. Whether it's James Bond and his martini, or Carrie Bradshaw and her go-to Cosmopolitan, cocktails can go a long way in building character and personality. These same cocktails can also add a bit of nostalgia to a Hollywood-themed event. So, as we pack our bags for sunny Southern California (**The Special Event** is May 2-5 at the Anaheim Convention Center), here are a few tasty libations to get you in the mood. Lights, camera, cheers! ●

MANHATTAN

Made famous by: *Some Like it Hot*

What it's about: After witnessing a mafia murder, slick saxophone player Joe and his long-suffering buddy, Jerry, improvise a quick plan to escape from Chicago with their lives. Disguising themselves as women, they join an all-female jazz band and hop a train bound for sunny California. While Joe pretends to be a millionaire to win over the band's singer, Sugar, Jerry finds himself pursued by a real millionaire (Joe E. Brown) as things heat up and the mobsters close in.

Year released: 1959





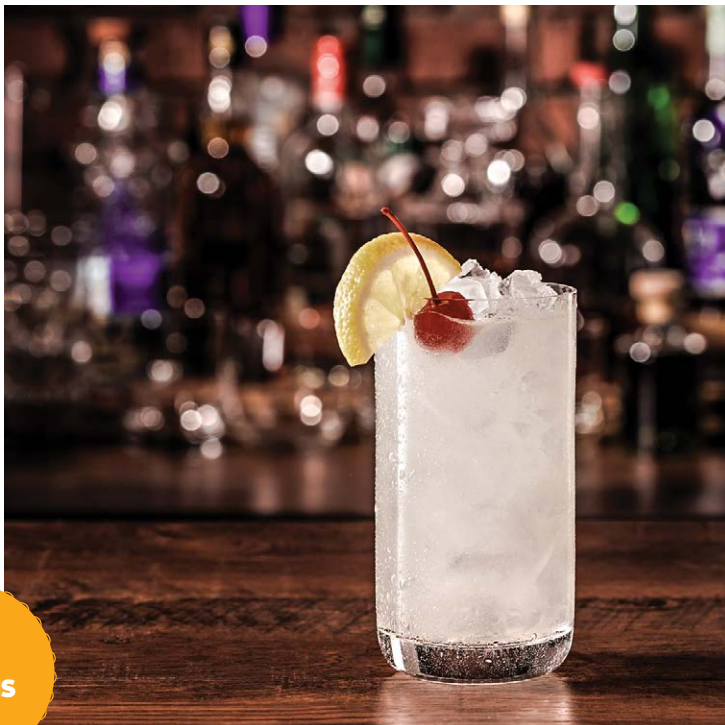
TOM COLLINS

TOM COLLINS

Made famous by: *Chinatown*

What it's about: A private detective hired to expose an adulterer in 1930s Los Angeles finds himself caught up in a web of deceit, corruption, and murder.

Year released: 1974



YIELD: 1 COCKTAIL

INGREDIENTS

1½ oz gin
1-2 dashes simple syrup
Juice of one lemon (or lime)
club soda

METHOD

1. Combine gin, sugar, and lemon (or lime) juice in a cocktail shaker and shake gently.
2. Pour into a highball glass filled with ice.
3. Top up with club soda and garnish with orange slice and maraschino cherry.



MANHATTAN

YIELD: 1 COCKTAIL

INGREDIENTS

2 oz bourbon or rye whiskey
1 oz sweet vermouth
2 dashes Angostura bitters
Maraschino cherry for garnish

METHOD

1. Stir the ingredients in a stirring or mixing glass with ice for about 30 seconds, then strain into a chilled Martini glass.
2. Garnish with a Maraschino cherry with a stalk (or skewer it).



...

FOOD FOR FÊTES



SUNSET BOULEVARD

SUNSET BOULEVARD

Recipe courtesy Total Wine & More

Why it's famous: In the old days, Sunset Boulevard represented the classic and glamorous Hollywood lifestyle. Today, the palm-lined street (which connects downtown Los Angeles to Hollywood, Beverly Hills and the

Pacific Coast Highway) retains its cinematic appeal, and the Sunset Strip portion has become a popular nightlife spot.

On the silver screen: An aging silent film queen refuses to accept that her stardom has ended. She hires a young screenwriter to help set up her movie comeback. The

screenwriter believes he can manipulate her, but he soon finds out he is wrong. The screenwriter's ambivalence about their relationship and her unwillingness to let go leads to a situation of violence, madness, and death.

Year released: 1950

YIELD: 1 COCKTAIL

INGREDIENTS

2 oz bourbon
4 oz ginger ale
1 splash cranberry juice
1 dash lime juice
Garnish with a maraschino cherry

METHOD

1. Pour bourbon and ginger ale into cocktail shaker with ice.
2. Shake well and pour into chilled glass.
3. Add splash cranberry juice.
4. Garnish with maraschino cherry.

MULHOLLAND DRIVE

Recipe courtesy Educated Barfly

Why it's famous: Mulholland Drive is a long, winding stretch of road through the Santa Monica mountains that is famous for its breathtaking views of the city and its history of famous residents.

On the silver screen: After a car wreck on the winding Mulholland Drive renders a woman amnesiac, she and a perky Hollywood-hopeful search for clues and answers across Los

Angeles in a twisting venture beyond dreams and reality.

Year released: 2001

YIELD: 1 COCKTAIL

INGREDIENTS

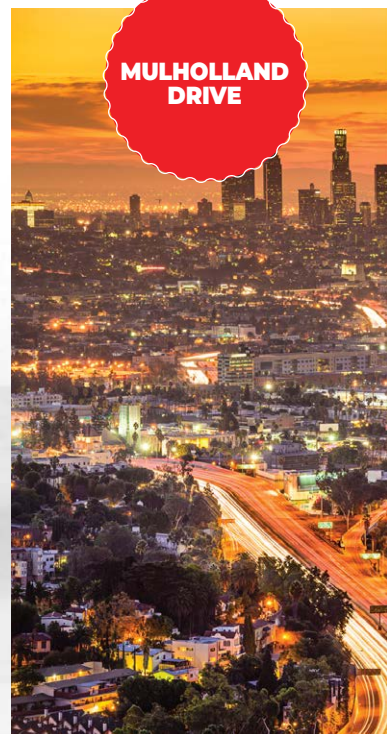
1 oz Campari
1 oz gin
1 oz Amaro Montenegro
1 bar spoon coffee liqueur
Garnish with an orange twist

METHOD

1. Add ingredients to glass
2. Add large cube of Ice
3. Stir until chilled
4. Garnish with orange twist



MULHOLLAND DRIVE





WHITE RUSSIAN

Made famous by: *The Big Lebowski*

What it's about: Ultimate Los Angeles slacker Jeff "The Dude" Lebowski, mistaken for a millionaire of the same name, seeks restitution for a rug ruined by debt collectors, enlisting his bowling buddies for help while trying to find the millionaire's missing wife.

Year released: 1998

Mastering Email as an Event Professional



When you can glance at your inbox and know you're not missing anything, **you can focus your attention on more important matters** without feeling pulled away.

By Elizabeth Sheils

With a wedding boom upon us and little space left in our schedules, there is no time for event professionals to get bogged down by overflowing inboxes and missed communications. You must be ready to respond to inquiries, book new leads, and keep up with client demands—none of which are easy when your emails are unmanageable!

Most people don't consider working through a cluttered inbox as a fun way to spend their time, but it's a small-but-significant activity that can change how you feel about your business on a day-to-day basis.

Think about it: When you know there are unread emails waiting for a response, you end up feeling the shame and guilt of not addressing them right away. But when you can glance at your inbox and know you're not missing anything, you can focus your attention on more important matters without feeling pulled away.

If you haven't yet mastered the art of inbox management, these tools and tips will help you create a system that allows you to wrangle the email monster once and for all.

ADDRESS THE LOW-HANGING FRUIT FIRST

Most inboxes are cluttered with subscriptions and junk emails that seem like they offer value but, in reality, are only there to sell you on a product or service. First things first, perform an inbox triage by sifting through your unread emails and deleting anything you do not need or plan to read. While you're at it, unsubscribe from any newsletters that end up in the trash unread. Even the small action of deleting an email requires

you to make a decision, which can be overwhelming over time.

As you take out the trash, make it easier on yourself by maximizing the power of your inbox's search bar. For example, say you get weekly email blasts from a local boutique but you stopped opening them a while ago. Instead of picking them out individually, search for the sender's name and batch delete everything all at once. You'd be surprised how much progress you can make simply by doing this with a few frequent senders!

SET UP YOUR VIRTUAL FILING CABINET

No emails should ever live in your inbox indefinitely—let that be your rule of thumb. An email should only linger around if it's part of an ongoing discussion or project. Otherwise, it belongs in your virtual filing cabinet or, in other words, your folder system. An effective folder hierarchy will keep all of your emails in the right place, so you never have to worry about an important conversation going missing.

How you set it up, though, is entirely up to you. Do you prefer to categorize your main folders by year (e.g. 2022, 2021, 2020) or by department (e.g. Sales, Client Work, Finances)? There is no right or wrong answer as long as it works for you. You're the only one spending time in your inbox, so pick a system that feels natural and easy to apply. And when in doubt, trust that the handy search bar can always bring up emails you need!

ADD EMAILS TO YOUR BLOCK SCHEDULE

Many entrepreneurs know and love block scheduling for removing distractions and focusing only on the



task at hand. However, this useful technique often doesn't factor in emails! Instead, an inbox becomes a stepping stone between tasks with constant check-ins to see if anything new has popped up.

Unfortunately, keeping your attention chained to your emails is like inviting a constant flow of interruptions to your day. Going forward, set aside one or two blocks of time each day to address emails—and stay out of your inbox the rest of the time! You will find it easier to focus and get through your significant tasks for the day, as well as stay on top of your emails without feeling stretched too thin.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EMAIL TEMPLATES

Spending less time in your inbox doesn't have to mean your inquiries and prospects will feel unheard. By using canned responses, you can effectively keep the communication channels open with timely responses without having to monitor your emails all day. A simple auto-responder that provides an estimated response time will do

wonders for setting clear boundaries without coming across as harsh or hard to reach.

Be sure that you follow up with personal replies during the periods you've blocked off for emails. Since you have time dedicated solely to your inbox, you'll be more capable of responding at length rather than feeling like you have countless other burning priorities just beyond your peripheral. That way, you're staying in touch with your contacts and avoiding the inevitable pile-up of emails marked as unread for "later."

These four strategies will help you ensure nothing goes unaddressed, allowing you to reclaim your schedule, your response time, and your mental wellbeing. If your inbox is currently overflowing with hundreds (or thousands) of emails, accept that it might take several days to implement this system and get situated. When you do, you'll find more peace in your days and less of the never-ending urgency that comes with an inbox that is bursting at the seams. ●

Elizabeth Sheils is the co-founder of [Rock Paper Coin](#), the first software platform to bring together wedding planners, couples, and vendors into one system for managing and paying contracts and invoices. Elizabeth is also a lead wedding planner with award-winning firm [Bridal Bliss](#), where she manages the Seattle team. In addition to recognition by *Special Events* in its Top 25 Event Pros to Watch series, she also earned a spot in *The BizBash 500* for 2021.

See Elizabeth Sheils at Catersource + The Special Event

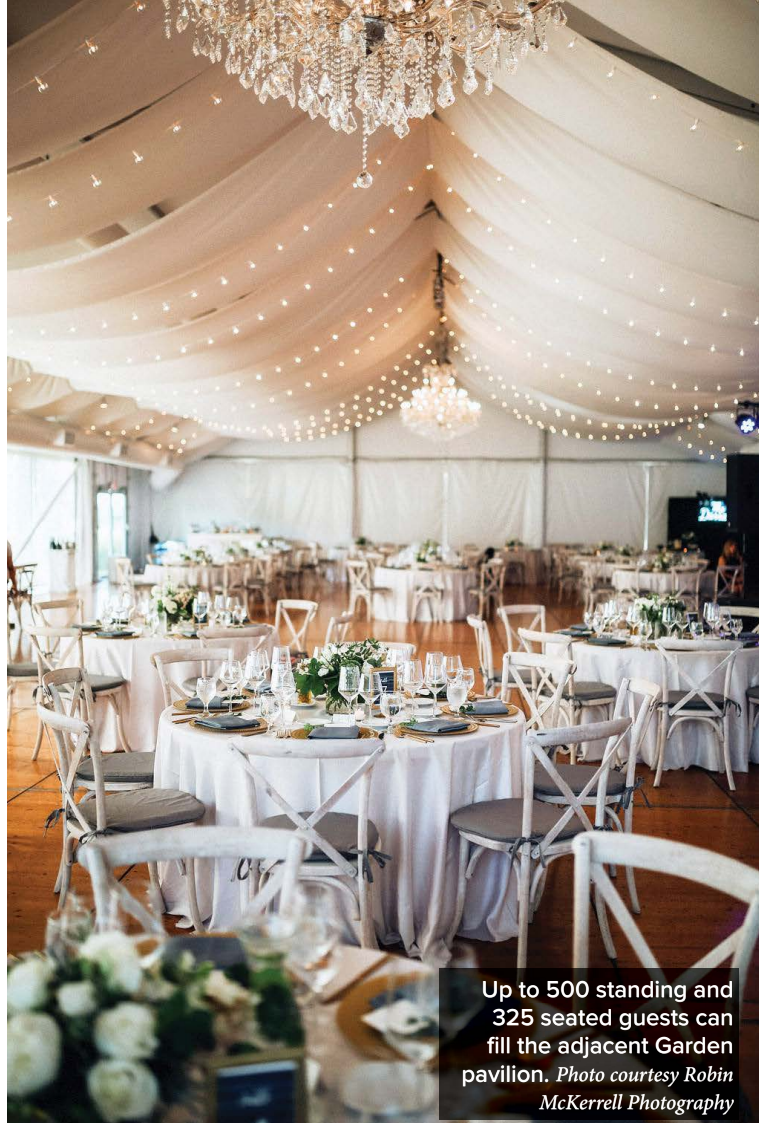
Catch [Elizabeth Sheils](#) at **Catersource + The Special Event (May 2–5 in Anaheim, CA)** with her session [Tech Security 101: Protect your business + your peace of mind](#) where she will walk attendees through the often-overlooked yet extremely vital steps to build a tech environment in your business that keeps out hackers, viruses, and other unwanted intrusions. She'll share her favorite apps and tools along with key strategies to safeguard sensitive information in your business—and on behalf of your client—so you can sleep better at night.

Get all the details at www.thespecialeventshow.com.

AS SEEN IN *Cincinnati*

Pinecroft at Crosley Estate, a beautiful Tudor estate once owned by inventor, innovator, and former owner of the Cincinnati Reds, Powel Crosley, Jr., sits on 18 pristine acres tucked away from the bustle of the city—but is just mere minutes from the liveliness of the downtown scene. Now maintained by Funky's Catering Events and the Cincinnati Preservation Society, its lush gardens, rows of orchards, and a gorgeous Garden pavilion, make this a favorite for everything from weddings to corporate to social events. ●

— Kathleen Stoehr



Up to 500 standing and 325 seated guests can fill the adjacent Garden pavilion. Photo courtesy Robin McKerrell Photography



The front of the Crosley Estate is stunning. This vintage car is a sight to behold. Photo courtesy Robin McKerrell Photography



Innovative menus and gorgeous tablescapes are the hallmark of a Funky's event. Photo courtesy Tire Swing Photography



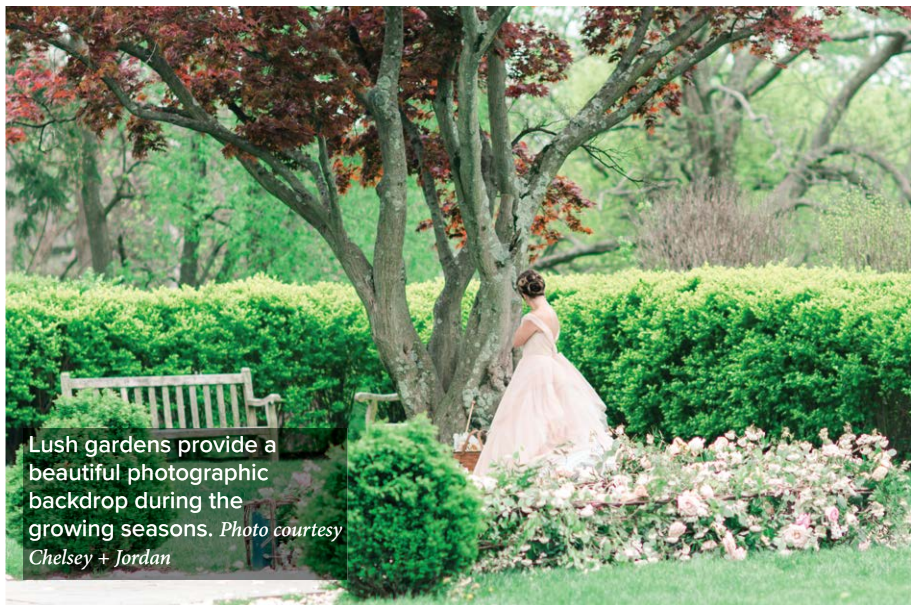
Dozens of rooms and access spaces feature original teak floors, mahogany walls, ornate carvings, and Tudor-style furnishings. Photo courtesy Lyell Photography



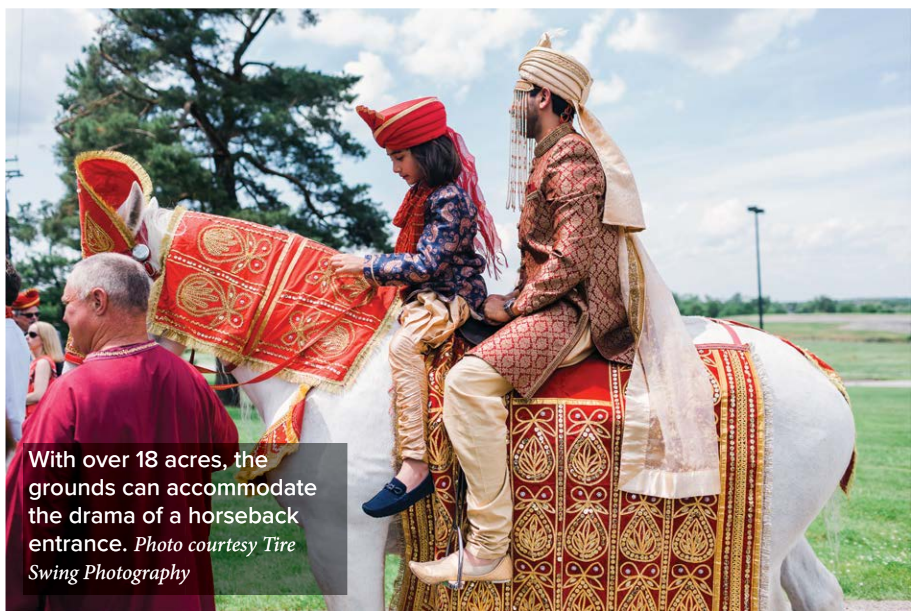
Front entrance of Pinecroft at Crosley often witnesses the spectacle of wedding "getaway" vehicles, including vintage Rolls Royce. Photo courtesy Amber Photography



A small balcony and seating area on the second level is ripe for bouquet tossing and photo opportunities. Photo courtesy Gracious Company Photography



Lush gardens provide a beautiful photographic backdrop during the growing seasons. Photo courtesy Chelsey + Jordan



With over 18 acres, the grounds can accommodate the drama of a horseback entrance. Photo courtesy Tire Swing Photography



Editor's note: I could fill this whole page with accolades about Christina, but for now I will simply say that she is the Opening General Session keynote at Catersource + The Special Event's 2022 conference and tradeshow in Anaheim, CA May 2-5. Find her on stage Wednesday morning, May 4 at 9:00 a.m., as well as participating in a few other educational sessions throughout the week. Go to schedule.catersource.com or schedule.thespecialeventshow.com for more information. PS: XO CM, love ya & can't hardly wait to see you rock that stage! —Kathleen

X Marks the Spot: A Forgotten Generation's Plea to the Hospitality Industry

By Christina Matteucci

It's always been easy to say: "I'm a loner."

I belong to a generation of loners. I'm X: one of the "The Forgotten Generation," and us Xers wear our exclusionary mantle with pride. The intrepid latchkey kids, after school we hopped on primitive computers to await the staticky tones of dial up internet—perfectly content—alone. Therefore, as I shut the door to my NYC apartment in March 2020 and began quarantine, I was unfazed. My generation made me a master at isolation! But as a 20-year veteran of the hospitality industry, now I have company—a lot of company.

In the early days of the pandemic, our community was (surprisingly) joining forces instead of competing. We were getting tipsy in online cocktail hours; seeking advice on landing that elusive PPP loan; venting, laughing, crying, and dreaming of COVID's end. The "togetherness" was refreshing, yet something was amiss.

As the "Old Guards" logged on to Zoom and the "Young Guns" embraced Clubhouse, an age-old problem reared its ugly head. We were only seeking comradery from our generational cliques. The Freshmen were shutting the door on our industry's past, and The Seniors were ignoring its future. We are quarantining amongst our contemporaries, and for this Gen Xer, that once familiar solitude now looms ominously.

Turns out there's reason to be scared: enter "The Great Resignation." In November 2021, The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported a record high "4.5 million people walking off the job," and that pain is felt across the entire

hospitality sector. While business booms, we suffer a mass exodus of talent. Because we are neither honoring our predecessors nor celebrating our successors, the Great Resignation highlights the damage of our divides. Our industry is being crippled by the misconception that when we isolate amongst our peers, we cling to power. It breaks my heart every time I learn a colleague has "moved on," because there is a simple fix.

Put plainly: our community must endeavor to bridge its ageist gaps. Research by Dr. Mary Donohue (a generational expert and social scientist) revealed employee turnover is reduced by 50% and productivity increased by 11% with Xer-Millennial collaboration. When we cultivate and reap the benefits of a cross-generational industry, not only do we gain resiliency, but we grow stronger because of the mixed company we keep.

As I face 2022, I choose to retire the exclusionary mantle of my generation and I challenge you to join me. Let's seek out the knowledge of those who came before and access the ideas of those waiting in the wings. If Boomers, Xers, Millennials, and Zoomers work in concert, voluntary turnover will decelerate, growth will be exponential, and the survival of the hospitality industry, assured.

Let's do what party-people do best: mingle.

I dare you—I dare us—to collaborate with generations outside our own; to form human connections that traverse decades; to decisively step out of our "comfort cliques;" to mingle knowledge, opinions, and insight... with the hope that because of our efforts, none of us will ever be loners again. ●

LCA LEADING CATERERS OF AMERICA

Leading Caterers of America (LCA) is comprised of the top caterers and event venues in the United States and Canada. When you need a caterer to make your next event exceptional, perfect and delicious, choose an LCA caterer.

Planning something special?

Let the best of the best in all things events be your guide.



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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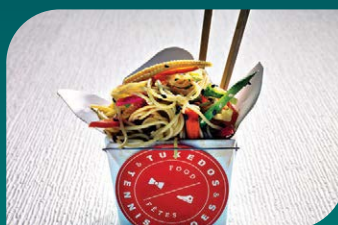
Photo Credit: Zilli Hospitality Group



SOUTH

Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia

Photo Credit: Rosemary's Catering



WEST

Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington

Photo Credit: DSquared Hospitality Company



EAST

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

Photo Credit: The Classic Catering People

Learn more at LeadingCaterers.com



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Show Issue 2022



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How does a simple salad
become a menu highlight?

Say Cheese



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SPRING 2022
VOLUME 20, NUMBER 1



features

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Catersource + The Special Event is headed to Anaheim this May for a sunny, sensational four days of networking, learning, tradeshow shopping, and events!

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A spotlight on the California cuisine movement, featuring recipes from some of California's top chefs

34... **A CRACK IN THE INDUSTRY**

Seven event professionals share their thoughts on mental health and substance abuse in the event industry



Behind the Cover

Weddings are back in full-swing and clients are opting for all the details to make an event truly feel personalized. Known for their inventive work and trademark lavish flower creations, David Beahm Experiences are more than up to the task, as evidenced by this wedding in Aspen, Colorado in 2021. *Design: David Beahm Experiences; Planning: Easton Events; Photo: Theo Milo Photography*

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Lon Lane reflects on the hidden flavors of Mexico



Westward Ho!

HAVE TO SAY...DANG, we have some good content in this issue. My goodness. Contributors and staff writers really knocked it out of the park. Yes, I know it's the show issue and the pressure to please is on, but I couldn't be prouder of the efforts certain people made on behalf of industry education.

First, hats off to Fausto Pifferrer and Reuben Bell. They approached me about pulling together an article that addresses mental health and I hopped onto that ride

without hesitation. Tough subject; definitely needs attention. With that, they pulled together contributors and we have for you a lovely, supportive, uplifting, and thoughtful feature. Even better, a session on mental health in the events and catering industry will be presented in Anaheim, with many of the same magazine contributors taking the stage, talking, and answering audience questions. Turn to [page 34](#) now; and be in Anaheim the first week of May to revisit the topic live.

Next up, we have a wowza of a piece on California cuisine, assembled by our own Amber Kispert. If we are planning to be in California soon, what better way than to be armed with past, present, and future as it relates to the cuisine? Our designer Sharon Carlson enhanced Amber's words by creating a graphic culinary timeline, too. It's a fun read and full of recipes for you to show your chefs and add to your own menus—because if there is one overarching comment to be made about California cuisine, nobody ever turns down fresh, hyper local, and delicious when it's presented to them on a plate. Turn to [page 24](#) to give it a read.

On the Menu features Chef Nettie Frank, who has attended Catersource multiple times but is taking to the stage for the first time (finally!) to teach two classes on our Culinary Experience stage. Learn more about this talented chef and get a few recipes in advance of her appearance, starting on [page 44](#).

We are also profiling our ACE award nominees, have some terrific content from Meryl Snow, Greg Karl, and Anthony Lambatos, and finish with a big “ta-da!”: a show preview full of information about everything from our Michael Roman Lifetime Achievement award winner to descriptions of our evening events in Anaheim, as well as short blurbs about our “bookend” keynotes Christina Matteucci (Wednesday 9:00 a.m.) and Chef Roy Choi (Thursday at 9:00 a.m.). Doors for both events open at 8:30 a.m.

See you soon, and if you have not yet registered, our Early Bird rate ends on April 8 so “tweet, tweet” get yourself over to conference.catersource.com and sign yourself up! See you soon!

Kathleen

Kathleen Stoehr
Director of Community & Content Strategy

MEET NOWSTA

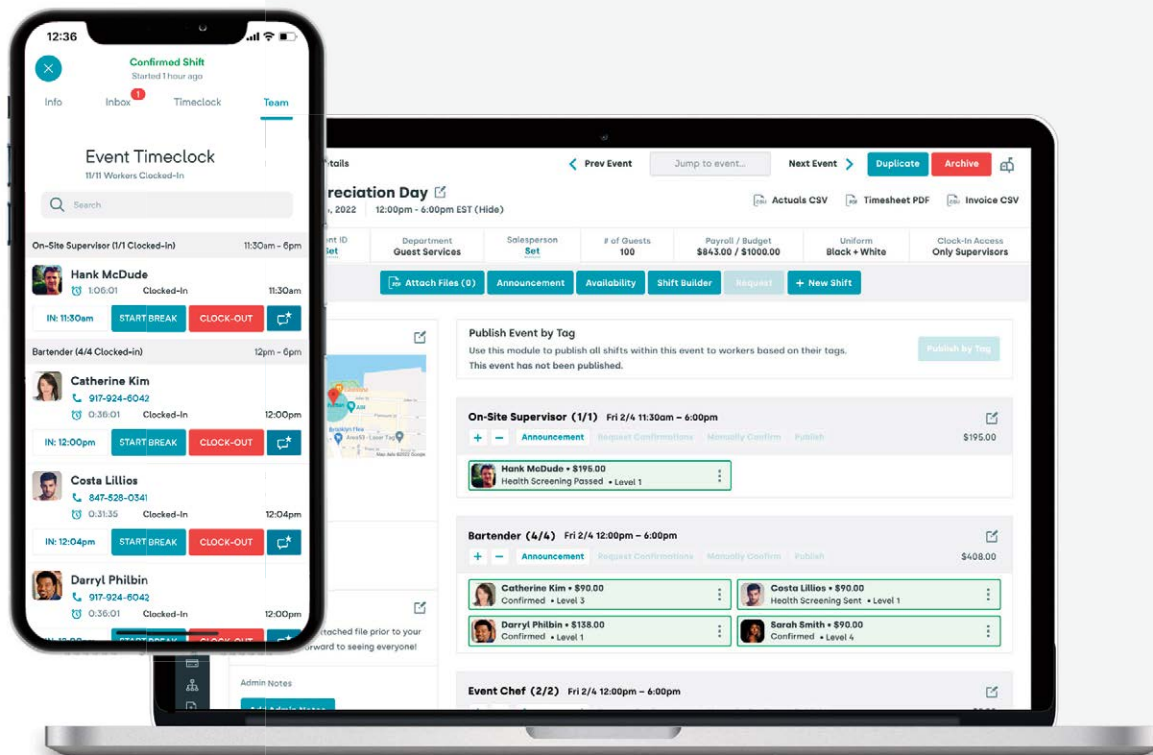
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Executive **Anthony Lambatos** talks company culture



Sales superstar **Meryl Snow** teases what to expect from her upcoming sessions during Catersource + The Special Event



Consulting expert **Greg Karl** takes a look at what proactive hospitality companies are working on



International Caterers Association Education Foundation (ICAIEF) board member **Lon Lane** reflects on the flavors of Mexico

What do you think of this issue? Like it? Love it? Have something to contribute to our website? We'd love to hear from you. Write us at editor@catersource.com.

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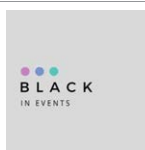
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Are Your 2022 Goals **SMART** Enough to Grow Your Catering Business?



Despite that we're already a few months into 2022, it's never too late to come up with strategic goals for business growth. Especially

over the past few years, your goals are something that should be ever-changing with the tides of the business world. That's where SMART goal planning comes in. During our latest ICA Roundtable, "A Goal Without a Plan Is Just a Wish: SMART Goals Setting Deep Dive," Lisa Ware, the Director of Sales and Business Development for Catering by Michaels, shared the importance of SMART goals for catering growth, as well as strategies for developing your own.

We're sharing the juiciest tidbits so you too can make your wishes into achievable goals for 2022! Ready to take some notes?

What are SMART goals, anyway?

You may have heard of SMART goals before, but here's a refresher about what exactly this valuable acronym stands for:

S – Specific: Be specific about what you want to accomplish.

M – Measurable: This helps you measure progress. Increasing corporate sales could be the goal; now pair that with a measure: increase corporate sales by 15%.

A – Attainable (Achievable): This part of your goal is meant to inspire motivation, not discourage action. Think about the goal and whether you have the tools/skills/budget to attain it! Also, consider if it's achievable in today's business climate.

R – Relevant (Realistic): Does it fit with the broader business goals?

T – Time-Bound (Timely): Anyone can set a goal, but if it lacks realistic timing, chances are you aren't going to succeed. Will it take one month, one quarter, or one year?

This is exactly how Ware and her team start their review process, so save it, and make it into a slide for your SMART goal brainstorming session—more on that later.

“Your goals are something that should be ever-changing with the tides of the business world.”

Why are SMART goals important?

Over the past couple of years, goal-setting has been harder than ever with the constant changes in the world, restrictions for the events industry, and general unknowns. So, now more than ever, as we continue down the road to recovery, we need to be intentional and strategic with the plans that get us back to the booming business we know we can have.

A **Harvard Business School** study uncovered a measurable “why” behind goal-setting that business owners and sales directors must consider. They found that 3% of graduates from their MBA program had their goals written down. Those 3% made 10 times as much as the other 97% put together a decade after graduation. So, this goes to show that goals can spark your long-term growth tenfold—and then some. And this is just one study; there are so many more that link setting goals with higher motivation, self-esteem, self-confidence, and autonomy! This is what we all need after a challenging epoch. Don’t you agree?

Implementing SMART goals with your team

Are you ready to put your plan into action?

Ware shared that her team started small when devising SMART goals for the business. It’s better to have something to set your sights on than have too many ideas and get overwhelmed. This leads to failure.

To start, have each team member set two SMART goals that fall under two different buckets. Buckets are areas that can spark impact for your organization. Think of areas like your top business goals, values, or mission. Here are the buckets Ware shared with her team. Use these as inspiration to get started:

Catering by Michaels 2022

SMART GOALS PLANNING

S	SPECIFIC	What do you want to do?
M	MEASUREABLE	How will you track your progress?
A	ATTAINABLE	How will you do it?
R	RELEVANT	Is this relevant to your professional life right now?
T	TIMELY	When do you want to do it?

WHAT ARE SMART GOALS AND ARE YOUR GOALS SMART?



SMART Goal Planning Timeline

- ☐ **August: 5 Minutes**
Refresh of SMART Goals at monthly all-team meeting
- ☐ **September: 10 Minutes**
Share with team what the “buckets” for the next year will be
Set expectation we will start 1:1 meetings in October
 - Send SMART goals brainstorming template
 - Sent calendar hits for 1:1 meetings in early October
- ☐ **October: 45 Minutes per Salesperson**
This is a BRAINSTORM initial meeting – no expectations for the team to come to the meeting with anything but initial ideas based on the buckets
- ☐ **Early November: 30 Minutes per Salesperson**
Follow up 1:1 meetings. Each team member comes to meeting with their rough draft of SMART goals to review together
- ☐ **Mid November: Via email. 5-10 Minutes per Salesperson**
2 weeks after 1:1 meeting, final draft emailed to me, minor edits if needed
- ☐ **December 1: Via email. 5-10 Minutes per Salesperson**
Final draft approval and compensation agreements sent for following year

WHAT ARE SMART GOALS AND ARE YOUR GOALS SMART?



Need a little inspiration to get started brainstorming SMART goals for your catering business? Here are a few examples of SMART goals ICA members developed during this collaborative roundtable session.

1. Annual Sales Goal

- a. Percentage increase by sales type
- b. Percentage increase by chosen venue
- c. 1a and 1b greatly help put intention behind how your team will achieve their main sales goal!

2. Relationship Development

3. Dealer's Choice (anything as long as it's relevant to your business)

4. Culture

5. Personal

Lead a session as a group with your entire management team and have

Catering by Michaels is a proud member of the ICA. For more information on how to join the ICA and to be notified of future catering industry webinars, events and education opportunities, visit internationalcaterers.org.


individuals share, or allow them to work solo and then share with their managers afterward. Knowing what the goals are allows management to cheer employees on and motivate them!

Making them stick

Now that your team has SMART goals written down, how do you make them accountable for achieving them?

Ware suggests setting a once-monthly 30-minute session to review SMART goals together, one-on-one with the manager or as a team.

Provide each team member with a template they can fill in with actions they've taken as a step toward achieving their SMART goals. Use the meeting to review, analyze efficacy, troubleshoot, and brainstorm other ideas or revise if needed.

This monthly consistency and accountability will lead to major ROI and changes by year-end! 

Don't miss the ICA during Catersource Conference & Tradeshow

Want more chats about goals and motivation from other like-minded catering professionals seeking growth? The International Caterers Association is waiting for you! Stop by the ICA Inspiration Zone during Catersource Conference & Tradeshow 2022 to join friends, peers, and colleagues.





Join us at Catersource for a taste of the cutting edge in Food & Beverage



VISIT BOOTH

1623






a conversation with

Roy Choi

Thursday, May 5 • 9:00 am

Roy is known as one of the architects of the modern food truck movement through Kogi BBQ by merging food and social media with community and honoring the street food culture that laid the path before him.

Join Roy at Catersource + The Special Event 2022 for a spirited conversation around his perspective of food, catering, and events amidst the backdrop of social justice. This is a can't miss opportunity to hear from the groundbreaking chef, author, and television personality.



Register today!

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Power Up Your Menu with **Plant**

Plant-based dishes are sprouting up on menus these days and with good reason. *By Chef Kevin Relf*

Working in hospitality for most of my career, I continually seek out those surefire, crowd-pleaser menu items that will appeal to a variety of people with different tastes, interests and dietary preferences. Particularly, when it comes to catering and special events, there just isn't enough time in the day or enough hands on deck for a lot of customization so we need go-to solutions that meet the needs of guests with dairy intolerance, as well as guests with other dietary restrictions.

What if I told you there is a way to serve delicious and distinctive dishes that accommodate a wealth of diverse tastes and diets? While it may sound too good to be true, you might be surprised to learn about the power of plants when it comes to pleasing a crowd.

Planting a seed: plant-based dishes

Using plant-based ingredients, including new dairy and meat alternatives, makes it possible to create menu items with mainstream appeal—everything from parfaits and smoothies to main dishes, dips and dressings.

Let's face it. Consumer dietary preferences are constantly evolving as are their expectations when it comes to dining away-from-home. Foodservice operations are often left playing catch-up with the myriad choices available on grocery store shelves and need to find ways to give their patrons more of what they want: plant-based foods.

- **A growing trend.** Diners desire more plant-based food in their diets. Nearly 30 percent of consumers have ordered plant-based items at restaurants, and, one in five consumers say they want more plant based foods .

- **Power of plants.** Foods made with plant-based ingredients are better

for the environment, offer important nutrients and are versatile to accommodate many different diets.

- **New meat and dairy alternatives are flourishing.** Thankfully, it is getting easier for chefs to access quality, plant-based ingredients—everything from new dairy alternatives made from almonds, oats or coconuts to a variety of meat alternatives including soy and yellow pea-based alternatives. With creativity on the menu, the possibilities are endless.
- **Great taste.** When you incorporate more plants and whole foods into your menu, you amp up good nutrition and great taste. As dairy and meat alternatives expand, so do their flavor profiles.

Opportunity in the bag

Dairy-free yogurt consumption has experienced double-digit growth, with the category up 14 percent year over year . However, I've found it also shines when planning plant-based menu items as a great option for meals and snacks alike.

Yoplait® ParfaitPro® Dairy Free Vanilla Coconut Based Yogurt Alternative for example, is the first and only dairy-free yogurt alternative in a bulk bag format, resulting in less prep time, with less labor, mess and waste.

While you might naturally think of smoothies and parfaits, this coconut-based yogurt and other yogurt alternatives are also ideal for dips, dressings, desserts and more. From coconut rice to zesty avocado dressing and from pancakes to hummus, dairy-free yogurt is creamy, versatile and supports a variety of dietary needs.

It can be used for savory and sweet and cold and hot applications and holds up well with no separation. Even better, Yoplait® ParfaitPro® Dairy Free Vanilla is crafted from simple, non-GMO ingredients and is gluten-free, soy-free, vegan, Kosher dairy, and made without gelatin and artificial flavors, making it a perfect option for any menu.

The next time you're trying to please a crowd and support a variety of dietary needs, look to plant-based ingredients such as dairy-free yogurt for everything from your starters through to dessert. Your patrons will thank you.

About the Author *Kevin Relf is part of the Chefs of the Mills team at General Mills that helps foodservice operations thrive. With an extensive background in hospitality, he appreciates the role of high-quality ingredients in keeping menu items simple and delicious. Today, Chef Kevin works closely with hotel/lodging and commercial restaurant operators and takes pride in helping to simplify their back-of-house operations and make their jobs easier.*





10 catering professionals. Three catering companies. One Super Bowl sized order.



THE CULINARY TEAMS FROM BOTH FOOTER'S CATERING AND BLUE RIDGE CATERING TRAVELED TO LOS ANGELES LAST MONTH TO ASSIST GOOD GRACIOUS! EVENTS IN EXECUTING A NUMBER OF SUPER BOWL EVENTS.

All photos courtesy Footer's Catering unless otherwise noted.

(RIGHT) SHADES OF GREEN CRUDITE WITH A GREEN GODDESS DRESSING IN A SHAVED WOODEN CONE..
(BELOW) FIVE SPICE CHICKEN IN EDIBLE TORTILLA SPOONS ON GOLD MIRRORED TRAYS, IN HONOR OF THE LOS ANGELES RAMS' TEAM COLORS (GOLD).



Being in Los Angeles and not getting some of the Super Bowl fun would have been disappointing to us," said Pauline Parry, owner of Good Gracious! Events.

LOS ANGELES IS CERTAINLY flying high at the moment. Not only did the Los Angeles Rams come out on top during Super Bowl 56 against the Cincinnati Bengals, but as the game's host city, it was an opportunity to showcase Los Angeles' new SoFi Stadium. It's no surprise that the team and the city pulled out all the stops when it came to celebrating.

Good Gracious! Events, a Los Angeles catering and event firm, was tasked with handling orders for upwards of 5,000 people after being hired by SLAY Events, the event producer that the Rams organization contracted with for their Super Bowl events.

"Being in Los Angeles and not getting some of the Super Bowl fun would have been disappointing to us," said Pauline Parry, owner of Good Gracious! Events.


Undertaking such a large order required Parry to call in reinforcements from across

the country. Ten catering professionals from the culinary teams of Footer's Catering in Denver and Blue Ridge Catering in Virginia boarded planes to lend a helping hand throughout the week leading up to the big game.

"We've catered events with SLAY and the Rams in every part of the city," Parry said. "From the Penthouse of the USC Building downtown to a 3,000-person event Sunday at the Jet Center hangars in Hawthorne, as well as a tailgate concierge event for 700 people at SoFi Stadium on Sunday," she said, from her office in mid-city Los Angeles.

The unification of these three catering companies, from very different areas of the country, reflects the camaraderie that has been developed over the years through conferences and professional events together. Organizations such as Catersource, the International Caterers

Association, and The Special Event have been instrumental in helping these entrepreneurs build bonds that have lasted decades.

“These events are exhausting as there are many moving parts especially working with sponsors,” said Parry, “but at the end of the day, when you have probably had 100 moments of problem solving, when it is received successfully there is a great sense of achievement and satisfaction.” 

Liese Gardner is the owner of **Liese Gardner Communications**, a marketing and brand strategy firm based in Los Angeles. Over the past two decades, she has helped top companies, creative start-ups and entrepreneurs find their own unique path to success through a style of marketing



dubbed “Brand Therapy.” Working closely with clients to uncover the challenges keeping them from growth, she then works strategically to increase awareness of that company and connect them to their ideal audience and clients through a combination of social media, email

marketing, website optimization, media pitches and creating direct connections. You can also catch **Liese Gardner** at **Catersource + The Special Event** during her session, *How to Master Online Writing & Get More Sales*, being held Thursday, May 5 at 1:00 p.m.

An All-Star Session

Don’t miss your chance to get an insider’s peek at Los Angeles’ new Sofi Stadium during **Catersource + The Special Event** by attending **Monique Boyd’s** session *New Building with High Expectations - On Premise Catering at SoFi Stadium*, which is being offered on Tuesday, May 3 at 4:00 p.m. During the session Boyd will share best practices and insights from this amazing experience and how this can be applied to your business.



WE ARE FAMILY

By Amber Kispert

For some, working with family can be a daunting, if not terrifying, thought. But for **Pauline Parry** (Founder and CEO) and **Joanne Purnell** (President), the mother-daughter team at Good Gracious! Events, it’s been one of the greatest experiences of their lives.

“If you find your passions align then do not hesitate or be afraid to work together as your relationship will only blossom more because of the love of what you do,” says Parry.

A tale of two chefs

While Parry may have fallen into the catering business by accident, Purnell was born into it.

Parry’s 40-year catering career from England to California.

“I accidentally fell into the hospitality industry over 40 years ago in England when I was invited to work in a husband and wife French bistro restaurant,” she says, “and when I moved to California, I thought I would join a restaurant or hotel, but it was the American entrepreneurial spirit of my friends that encouraged me to start my own catering company. Even though I have never trained as a chef or worked in a commercial kitchen, I absolutely loved cooking right from an early age and to do this as a business was a daunting but I just got myself a business card and called myself a caterer.”

Then 22 years ago, Purnell found herself following in her mother’s footsteps.

“From a very early age I always helped to help my mum cook whether it was helping to make our birthday cake or stringing beans or even peeling potatoes—I always wanted to be a chef,” she says. “So, when it came to deciding what I would do for my future, it was a no brainer and decided that this is my future.”



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As their working relationship evolved, Parry gravitated to the front of the house managing sales, design, and logistics, while Purnell took over the kitchen after attending the California Culinary Academy.

A beautiful balance

Having two generations with different backgrounds has only proven to be an asset to Good Gracious! Events, blending both classic and modern cuisines from England and California into a truly balanced recipe for success.

"I do believe it opens our minds to possibilities being from two generations," says Parry. "However, because I am older does not mean my style is stuck in the '70s and '80s."

Purnell agrees. "My mother always keeps her mind fresh to new ideas and because of that the generation gap is not so pronounced," Purnell says. "We both have a lot of fun creating new foods and presentations."

Both women also attribute their successful working relationship to learning from one another.

"I have watched her grow to be a great leader and can execute a kitchen with tremendous skill," Parry says of her daughter. "I tend to be a grey or wishy washy when making decisions, but Joanne is a clear black and white girl when making decisions. I wish I was a bit more that way. She came into the business as the bosses' daughter; she had to work extremely hard to gain the respect of her work colleagues and she did just that."

Purnell on the other hand, admires her mother's business savvy. "My mother has a tremendous amount of talent and expertise, and made this company what it is today," she says. "Her vision of not wanting to be the biggest only the best paid off and I realize I have really big shoes to follow."

"We have good days and bad days," Parry says, "but the bottom line is because Joanne is culinary and I am more front of the house, we can do our jobs in fairly good harmony. Even if no words are spoken, we are in complete understanding of any situation when that happens."

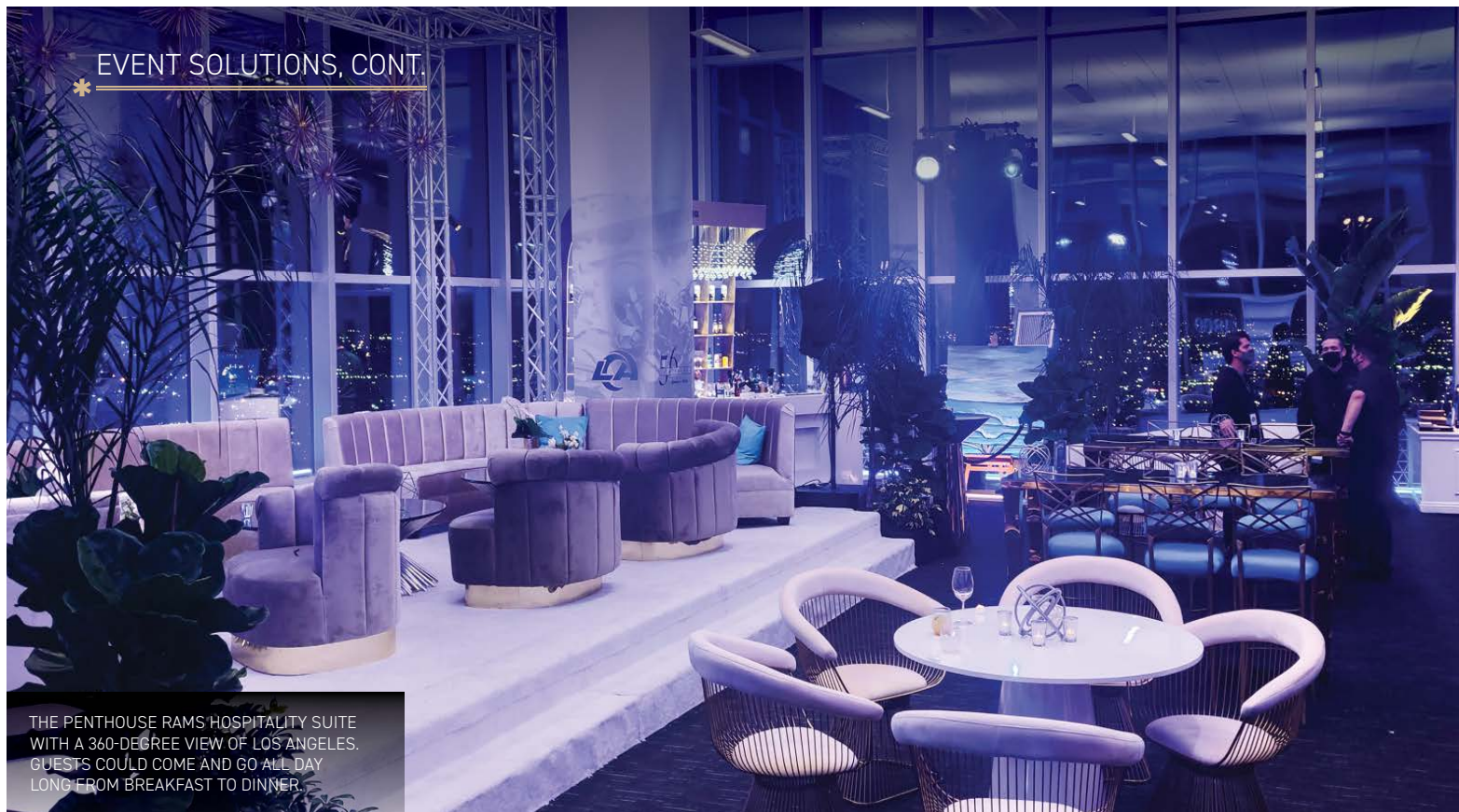
PAULINE PARRY AND HER DAUGHTER JOANNE PURNELL BALANCE EACH OTHER WHILE WORKING TOGETHER AT GOOD GRACIOUS! EVENTS. PARRY HANDLES ALL THINGS DESIGN AND LOGISTICS, WHILE PURNELL IS THE MASTER OF THE KITCHEN. PHOTOS COURTESY GOOD GRACIOUS! EVENTS

See Good Gracious! Events Live

You can see both Pauline Parry and Joanne Purnell during **Catersource + The Special Event, May 2-5 at the Anaheim Convention Center**. Parry will present *So, You Want to Write a Book?* on Wednesday, May 4 at 2:30 p.m., and you can catch Purnell on Tuesday, May 3 at 10:00 a.m. during *Superstar Short Plates*. Parry will also be signing her new book, *My Culinary Love Story*, in the Catersource + The Special Event onsite bookstore.

Visit schedule.catersource.com for all the details.

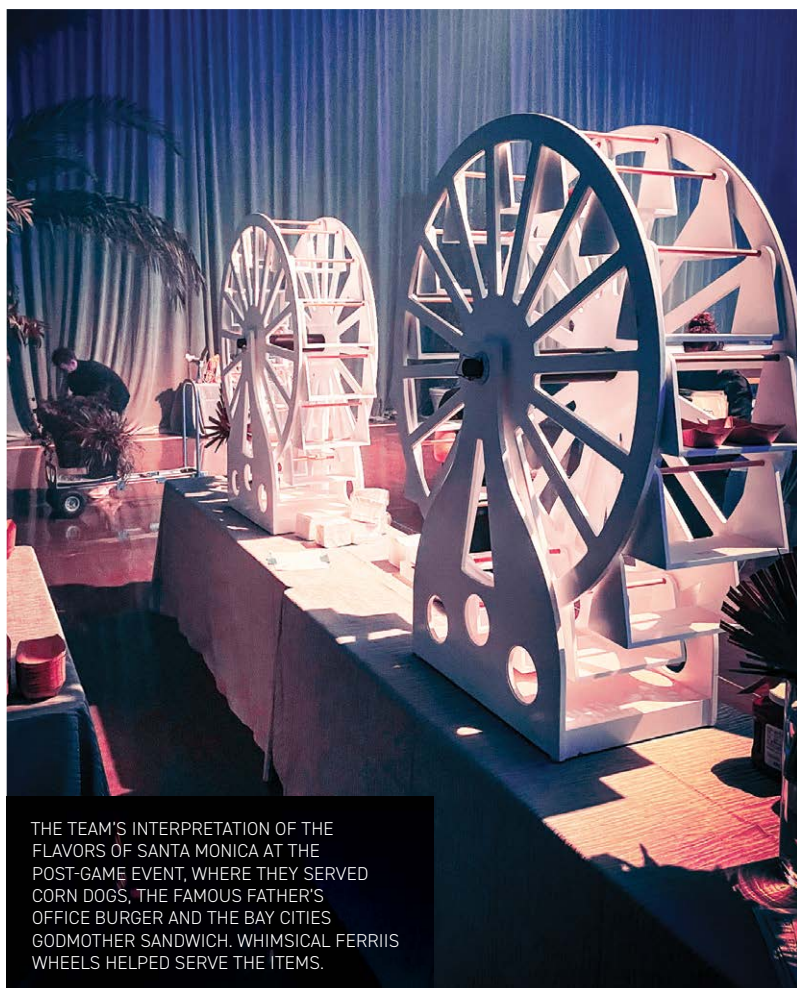
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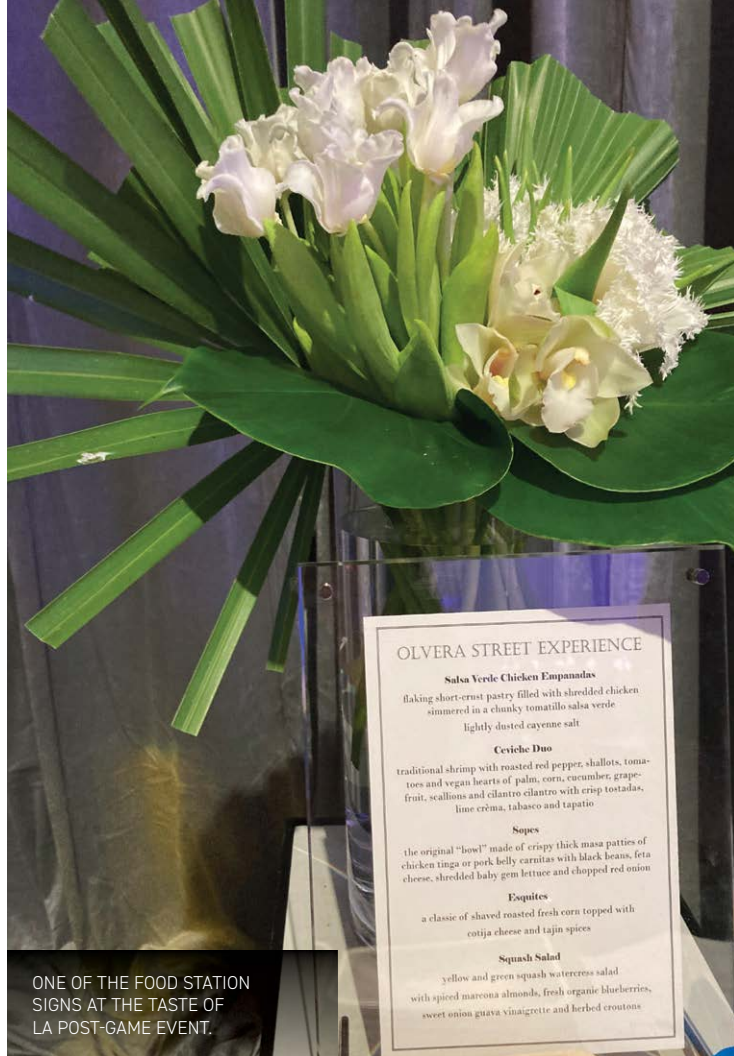
THE PENTHOUSE RAMS HOSPITALITY SUITE WITH A 360-DEGREE VIEW OF LOS ANGELES. GUESTS COULD COME AND GO ALL DAY LONG FROM BREAKFAST TO DINNER.



RASPADO DE TAMARINDO, TAMARIND SHAVED ICE, LAVA SALT, TEQUILA 1800.



THE TEAM'S INTERPRETATION OF THE FLAVORS OF SANTA MONICA AT THE POST-GAME EVENT, WHERE THEY SERVED CORN DOGS, THE FAMOUS FATHER'S OFFICE BURGER AND THE BAY CITIES GODMOTHER SANDWICH. WHIMSICAL FERRIS WHEELS HELPED SERVE THE ITEMS.



ONE OF THE FOOD STATION SIGNS AT THE TASTE OF LA POST-GAME EVENT.





Salute! The Ritual of the Italian Aperitivo & Apericena

SHAKER

YIELD: 1 COCKTAIL

INGREDIENTS

2.5 oz Campari
2 drops saline s
1 dash orange fl
Orange twist, fo

METHOD

1. Combine ingredi
shaker.
2. Add ice and sh
10 seconds.
3. Strain into chi
4. Garnish with c

By Amber Kispert



Nobody understands the welcoming embrace of hospitality quite like the Italians. Making every guest feel essential seems to be a core cultural value. In fact, this concept can be evident at bars and restaurants throughout Italy in the form of the time-honored tradition of aperitivo.

Aperitivo is a drinking tradition in Italy following the workday, like the American happy hour, but with a tad more well, hospitality. Aperitivo is as much about the drinks (typically lower ABV), and the small bites that are served as it is about the atmosphere.

“The aperitivo as a ritual is a social gathering, when people basically get together and they drink stimulating drinks and of course, they eat little small bites, while they recap the day with colleagues and friends, and they brush off all the frustrations of the day while kicking off the evening at the same time,” said Master Mixologist Livio Lauro during a webinar with the United States Bartenders’ Guild (USBG). “Obviously, there are similarities to the American happy hour, but it’s intended to be a little more social.”

“When I happy hour in America, I happy hour

with my two or three friends; but when I’m aperitivoing in Italy, I’m aperitivoing with everyone in the room,” said Lauro during Tales of the Cocktail 2021. “It’s a mindset that you’re with a conglomerate of people and enjoying that.”

The tradition of aperitivo has also given rise to the apericena, which puts an emphasis on the food.

So, forget what you know about cocktail hours and Italian meals, because aperitivo and apericena can bring an entirely different ethos to any of your future events.

Aperitivo 101

Unlike American happy hour, aperitivo is not about downing a couple of cheap beers to forget the day you had at work. It is about easing out of the day and whetting the appetite for the evening meal.

Aperitivo is not just a ritual however, it is also a type of Italian liqueur typically enjoyed during aperitivo, such as Campari, Luxardo, Casoni, Aperol, and Risolio. However, aperitivo can also be a generic name for any type of drink enjoyed during aperitivo (similar to the way Americans use “cocktail” interchangeably).

“You can have an aperitivo for your aperitivo at the aperitivo,” Lauro

NEGRONI BIANCO

YIELD: 1 COCKTAIL

INGREDIENTS

1 oz dry gin
1 oz Luxardo Bitter Bianco
liqueur, or something similar
1 oz white (bianco) vermouth
Orange wedge, for garnish

METHOD

1. Pour all ingredients into an ice-filled Old Fashioned glass and slightly stir.
2. Garnish with orange slice and serve.



The perfect pairing

During both aperitivo and apericena, small bites, also known as cicchetti, are served alongside drinks. Here are a few of the options you may consider for your next event.

- 🍷 **Polpettes**
(miniature meatballs)
- 🍷 **Chips**
- 🍷 **Crostinis**
- 🍷 **Olives**
- 🍷 **Chicken wings**
- 🍷 **Roasted vegetables**
- 🍷 **Taralli** (similar to a cracker or pretzel)
- 🍷 **Nuts**
- 🍷 **Fruit**
- 🍷 **Cheese selection**
- 🍷 **Savory pies or tarts**
- 🍷 **Pickles**
- 🍷 **Cured meats**
- 🍷 **Arancinis**
(fried risotto balls)
- 🍷 **Tramezzinis** (mini triangular sandwiches)
- 🍷 **Paninis**
- 🍷 **Pasta salads**
- 🍷 **Focaccia**
- 🍷 **Pizza**
- 🍷 **Fried fish**
- 🍷 **Bruschetta**
- 🍷 **Pâté**
- 🍷 **Couscous**
- 🍷 **Breadsticks**
- 🍷 **Biscotti**



said during the USBG webinar, with a wry smile.

The basics of aperitivo are:

Drinks to order: Common aperitivo cocktails include Negroni, Aperol Spritz, Bellini, Prosecco, or a small beer.

Snacks to expect: Typically a mix of small sandwiches, chips, olives, or nuts.

Once the aperitivo concludes, patrons will typically return home to ready themselves for the evening's meal.

Apericena 101

Whereas aperitivo is about beverages, apericena (aperto is “to open” and cena is “dinner”) is the middle ground between a full-blown dinner and some nibbles (risottos, bruschetta, salads, crostini, roasted vegetables, pasta and cured meats), traditionally served buffet-style.

“By no stretch do I want the apericena to be compared to a buffet,” Lauro said. “The only buffet-like portion of it is the fact that you can grab your food at a buffet.”

Apericena originated within



GARIBALDI

YIELD: 1 COCKTAIL

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ oz Campari
- 4 oz freshly squeezed orange juice
- Orange wedge, for garnish

METHOD

1. Fill a highball glass with ice cubes.
2. Add the Campari and orange juice and stir to combine.
3. Garnish with an orange wedge.



ITALIAN SPRITZ

YIELD: 1 COCKTAIL

INGREDIENTS

- 3 oz prosecco (or sparkling wine of your choice)
- 1 oz aperitif of choice, such as Aperol or Campari
- 2 oz club soda or sparkling water (optional, to taste)
- Lemon slice, for garnish
- Rosemary sprig, for garnish

METHOD

1. Fill a large wine glass with ice.
2. Add your aperitif of choice, then sparkling wine. Stir gently to combine. Top with soda. Top with soda.
3. Garnish and enjoy

BELLINI

YIELD: 1 COCKTAIL

INGREDIENTS FOR THE PEACH PURÉE

- 4 ea. medium white peaches, pitted and quartered
- 3 ice cubes
- 1 tsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ½ oz simple syrup (or 1 T sugar)

METHOD

In a blender or food processor, add the peaches, ice, lemon juice, and simple syrup (or sugar). Blend until smooth.

INGREDIENTS FOR BELLINI

- 2 oz peach purée
- 4 oz chilled prosecco, or sparkling white wine
- Peach slice, for garnish

METHOD

1. Pour peach purée into champagne flute.
2. Fill a highball glass with ice cubes.
3. Slowly top with sparkling wine while gently stirring to incorporate. If you like, garnish with a slice of peach, either slit and rested on the rim or dropped into the glass.



university areas as a response to the needs of college students.

“They’re broke, but they’re foodies,” Lauro said, “and the apericena answers their need of ‘how can we, without a lot of money, look pretty, eat good food, and socialize with the right people?’”

The apericena, however, can be controversial among restaurateurs.

“They can’t reconcile the idea of giving away food,” Lauro said, “but

there’s mathematical proof that when you eat salty food, you order an extra drink, and the drinks are where you’re making your money. Patrons are feeding themselves and the food is fueling their thirst, and their thirst is what you’re making money off of.”

Take a page out of the Italian playbook for your next event with these easygoing, easy-sipping cocktails. Better still: add a few snacks (cicchetti) while you’re at it! **CS**



(TOP ROW FROM LEFT)
SHAVED PORTOBELLO MUSHROOM SALAD WITH ASPARAGUS, CARROT, RADISH, CELERY LEAF AND HEART, BELGIAN ENDIVE, ASIAGO, AND MEYER LEMON.
Photo courtesy Keith Lord

WHITE CORN TEMPURA WITH AIOILI, COTIJA, AND LIME.
Photo courtesy Keith Lord

LAMB CHOP WITH MINT GLAZED APRICOTS, COFFEE RAS EL HANOUT DUKKAH SPICE, PISTACHIO BUTTER, AND PINK ICE CRESS.
Photo courtesy Keith Lord

WARM SUMMER FARM TOMATOES (ALL THE VIETNAMESE HERBS, AVOCADO PURÉE WITH LEMONGRASS, NUOC CHAM VINAIGRETTE).
Photo courtesy Keith Lord

TOMATOES WITH TOGARASHI, CHIVE, RED SHISO, CHILIES, CUCUMBER, AND SHISO PUREE.
Photo courtesy lunaphoto

DUNGENESS CRAB WITH TOMATO EATER STAR ANISE GELEE, EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL, TOMATO, CHIVE, CRUNCHY SALT, AND CAVIAR.
Photo courtesy lunaphoto

(RIGHT) CHIVE GEL, BLUEBERRY GEL, PINK LEMONADE BLUEBERRY GEL, CORN SOUP, ARUGULA LEAVES, AND ARUGULA FLOWERS.
Photo courtesy Keith Lord





California Dreamin'

California cuisine puts the focus
on fresh, local ingredients

By Amber Kispert

*I*f you ask different chefs to describe California cuisine, you will probably get different answers from each, but they'll most likely all feature the same general idea.

Fresh. Sustainable. Organic. Seasonal. Local. Authentic. Fusion. Simple.

"If you're not using fresh, locally produced, amazing products, prepared simply and with nutrition and healthfulness in mind," says Chef Keith Lord, owner of Strateje Fourteen (San Diego, CA), "what are you even doing?"

Not just farm-to-table

The term "California cuisine" can mean different things to different people. While some may use it as catch-all term for cuisine that hails from California, others may associate it more

with the farm-to-table movement. But it is a little bit of both.

“Everyone uses and sometimes abuses that farm-to-table moniker, but it’s a movement that began with a small handful of American chefs, who changed what the French chefs in California were doing,” Lord says.

The origin of California cuisine dates back to 1952 when Helen Brown released her *West Coast Cookbook*, which advocated for the use of ingredients found in one’s own backyard rather than relying on what was available at the grocery store. California cuisine began to make a name for itself in the culinary world in the ‘70s and ‘80s when chefs like Alice Waters (Chez Panisse), Sally Schmitt/Thomas Keller (French Laundry), Patrick Terrail (Ma Maison), Jeremiah Tower (Stars), and even Wolfgang Puck (Spago) started embracing the bounty that could be found at nearby farms.

“The revolution that the menu started in 1976 has succeeded all too well.

Everybody has all those ingredients now, and they’re all over the country,” according to Jeremiah Tower, in a [2017 interview with Eater San Francisco](#), about the development of the “New California Cuisine” dinner at Chez Panisse.

“I say too well,” Tower continued, “because everybody’s got all these ingredients now, and they want to put 15 of them on every plate, which is boring, silly, and not very good. It’s like a paintbox you get as a kid. There are eight colors. Then you get one that has 30 colors and you think it’ll be five times better, but you mix it up and you get brown. The world is full of brown plates.”

Characteristics of California cuisine

California cuisine is less about specific recipes and focuses more on dishes that are driven by fresh and sustainable ingredients, with special attention paid to seasonality and the bounty of the region.

“There are so many different regions in California that grow so many different products, that once you start to look around, you can find so many more amazing things are grown here than in a lot of other states,” Lord says.

Dana Buchanan, owner of Primal Alchemy Catering (Long Beach, Calif.), agrees.

“California has been referred to as the Breadbasket of America. With over 400 different types of crops grown we are the fifth largest food producer in the world, so access is not an issue here and contributes to our ability to create with a wide variety of ingredients.”

In a nutshell, most chefs will describe California cuisine as: “A wonderful combination of seasonality, chef-forward cuisine, and creatively inspired menus,” says Rosemary Vera, owner of Colette’s Catering & Events (Fullerton, Calif). “We gather inspiration from the sunny weather, the abundance of produce



A History of California Cuisine

HELEN EVANS BROWN publishes *Helen Brown’s West Coast Cookbook*.

She advocated using fruits and spices available in one’s own neighborhood, forgoing poor grocery store substitutes, as well as fresh seafood, caught locally.



ALICE WATERS opens *Chez Panisse*, whose menu incorporated the theory that it was of primary importance to use food that was fresh and in season, grown locally, organically, and sustainably. Because the ingredients were procured locally in California, the food took on a very Californian character, hence helping create *California cuisine*.



PATRICK TERRAIL opens *Ma Maison*, which is often credited with getting *Wolfgang Puck*’s career off the ground and for starting the trend in cuisine known as “*California nouvelle*.” *Ma Maison* was known for using ingredients sourced from the local farmers markets that highlighted the glory of California’s produce and pairing it with French technique.



JEREMIAH TOWER is hired at *Chez Panisse*.



SALLY SCHMITT and her husband *Don* open *The French Laundry*, where they began serving single-menu monthly dinners that emphasized local ingredients.



WOLFGANG PUCK opens his restaurant *Spago*, which popularized the style pizza.



..... 1952 1971 1973 1978 1978 19



CAVIAR POTATO TACO

Photo and recipe courtesy
24 Carrots Catering and Events

INGREDIENTS

4-inch corn tortilla
Crushed, steamed russet potato,
seasoned with salt
½ tsp Koji Crème Fraîche (recipe
below)
2 tsp Tsar Nicoulai Reserve
Caviar
Chive Chiffonade for garnish

METHOD

1. Fill tortilla halfway with crushed potato and fold into taco shape.
2. Pan-fry in a cast iron pan on both sides until golden and crispy.
3. Slightly open taco and dollop 2 tsp of Koji Crème Fraîche, 2 tsp caviar, and finish with chives

INGREDIENTS FOR KOJI

CRÈME FRAÎCHE

2 cups Crème Fraîche
½ cup salad oil
2 garlic cloves
4 T Koji
½ tsp salt

METHOD

1. Puree until smooth.

NG PUCK
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JEREMIAH TOWER
opens Stars, which is
often considered one
of the birthplaces of
California cuisine.



MARK PEEL, who
worked with both Alice
Waters and Wolfgang
Puck, opens Capanile,
notable for its California
cuisine.



THOMAS KELLER
purchases The French
Laundry, which commits
itself to creating
classic French cuisine
with the finest quality
ingredients.



THOMAS KELLER
publishes The French
Laundry Cookbook,
which has been awarded
three International
Association of Culinary
Professionals (IACP)
awards for Cookbook of
the Year, the Julia Child
"First Cookbook" Award,
and the Design Award.



DANIEL PATTERSON
opens Coi, which
emphasizes vegetables
and foraged foods
while maintaining the
traditional emphasis
on local foods and
presentation.



1982.....1984.....1989.....1994.....1999.....2006.....

“A wonderful combination of seasonality, chef-forward cuisine, and creatively inspired menus.”

—ROSEMARY VERA



PORK BELLY & SHISHITO

Photo and recipe courtesy
Colette's Catering & Events

YIELD: 4

INGREDIENTS FOR CONFIT PORK BELLY

- 10 lb pork belly
- 4 cups onion, chopped
- 4 cups celery, chopped
- 3 ½ cups carrot, chopped
- ½ cup rosemary
- ½ cup thyme
- 4 lb pork fat
- 2 T coriander seeds
- 2 T star anise
- 2 T Szechuan pepper, chopped
- 6 T salt
- 4 T pepper

METHOD FOR CONFIT PORK BELLY

1. Score the pork belly on the fat with a diamond pattern
2. Season with salt and pepper on both sides
3. Sear pork belly on both sides until golden brown
4. Remove pork belly and with the same searing drippings add vegetables and caramelize them
5. Add all ingredients in a deep hotel

pan with dry spices previously
toasted

6. Confit pork belly in pork fat for three hours at 275 degrees
7. Remove pork belly from the confit liquid press over night with two sheet pans and some weight
8. Dice pork belly into 1-inch cube size

INGREDIENTS FOR PONZU GLAZE

- 4 oz garlic, minced
- 4 oz sesame oil
- 4 oz white sesame seeds
- 1 cup mirin
- 32 oz soy sauce
- 2 oz yuzu juice
- 2 oz lime juice
- 2 oz orange juice
- 2 oz rice vinegar
- 8 oz sugar
- 1 oz corn starch
- 1 oz water

METHOD FOR PONZU GLAZE

1. In a small pot bring soy sauce to boil
2. Add sugar and all other liquid ingredients
3. Cook for 10 minutes at low heat
4. Toast sesame seeds and ground half of the quantity and keep the other half whole and toasted

5. At low heat toast minced garlic in the
sesame oil until golden brown

6. Combine sesame seeds and toasted garlic to the cooked liquid
7. Prepare a slurry with corn starch and water add to your sauce and cook for additional 5 minutes at low heat

INGREDIENTS FOR HOUSE FURIKAKE

- 4 oz nori sheets
- 1 oz white sesame seeds
- 1 oz black sesame seed
- 2 oz toasted garlic, minced
- 1 oz sugar
- 1 oz togarashi pepper, chopped
- 2 oz rubu arare rice pearls
- 3 T bonito flakes
- 1 oz salt
- 2 oz sesame oil

METHOD FOR HOUSE FURIKAKE

1. Toast sesame seeds and garlic at low heat until golden brown, cool down after cooked
2. Lightly toast the nori sheet and shred with a knife
3. Combine all other ingredients and store in jar with silica gel packet

available almost year-round, the coastline and all that it has to offer, and the fresh ingredients from local farmers and butchers. Seafood is a must, trendsetting flavors are always an element, and contemporary menu planning takes inspiration from all the different cultures that make our location truly unique.”

Let’s look more closely at the different facets of California cuisine.

Make it fresh.

Freshness is one of the most important aspects of California cuisine. Dishes that are low in saturated fats and high in fresh vegetables and fruits with lean meats and fresh seafood from the California coast often define the style.

“It is a fundamental fact that no cook, however creative and capable, can produce a dish of a quality any higher than that of its raw ingredients,”

according to a famous quote from Alice Waters. “Always explore your garden and go to the market before you decide what to cook.”

Local and sustainable ingredients.

Not only do chefs want the freshest ingredients, but they also want to know where they have come from. It is easier to use microgreens that were picked that day from a local farmer rather than trying to import them from states away. Plus, working with local, sustainable vendors not only improves the ecosystem, but it also increases a sense of community, since the ingredients come from real people rather than a faceless corporate entity.

“I think that just being seasonal and local is not enough, you need the sustainable component,” Buchanan says. “Making fresh ceviche with local seafood and ingredients and

then serving it to guests in a plastic container, is not how I see California cuisine. I hope that more people care about where their food really comes from and that this isn’t just a fad but becomes the normal way of eating.”

Simple preparation.

Now, since chefs have taken the time to carefully source the best and most flavorful ingredients possible, it would be counterproductive to destroy their natural flavor by overcooking them or drowning them with other flavors. As such, California cuisine focuses on handling the ingredients as little as possible, and instead focuses on simple preparations that will allow their natural flavor to shine.

“When you have the best and tastiest ingredients, you can cook very simply and the food will be extraordinary because it tastes like what it is,” according to Waters.

CHARCOAL-ROASTED SWEET POTATOES

Photo and recipe courtesy
24 Carrots Catering and Events

INGREDIENTS

Sweet potatoes
Japanese crunchy chili garlic
Toasted sesame seeds
Charred Scallion Crème Fraîche
(recipe below)
Nori rice cracker
Fleur de Sel
Scallion chiffonade

METHOD

1. Roast sweet potatoes on smoldering coals until cooked.
2. Cut potatoes in half.
3. Dress with all garnishes

INGREDIENTS FOR SCALLION CRÈME FRAÎCHE

2 cups Crème Fraîche
12 scallions, charred and chopped
½ cup salad oil
2 garlic cloves
4 T Koji
½ tsp salt

METHOD

1. Puree until smooth



SEAFOOD TACOS

Recipe courtesy Pauline Parry, from *My Culinary Love Story*

INGREDIENTS

3 T of extra virgin olive oil
Juice of one fresh lime
2 tsp of chili powder
1 tsp of paprika
½ tsp cayenne pepper
½ tsp ground cumin
1 ½ lbs cod or other flaky white fish
½ T vegetable oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
8 ea. corn tortillas
1 ea. avocado, diced
8 ea. lime wedges for serving
Sour cream for serving

INGREDIENTS FOR CORN SLAW

½ cup mayonnaise
Juice of 1 lime
2 T fresh chopped cilantro
1 tsp honey
2 cups shredded purple cabbage
1 cup corn kernels
1 ea. jalapeno, finely minced

METHOD

1. In a medium shallow bowl, whisk together olive oil, lime juice, paprika, chili powder, cumin, and cayenne. Add cod, tossing until evenly coated. Let marinate for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, make slaw. In a large bowl whisk together mayonnaise, lime juice, cilantro, and honey. Stir in cabbage, corn, and jalapeno. Season with salt and pepper.
2. In a large nonstick skillet over medium heat, heat vegetable oil. Remove cod from marinade and season both sides of each filet with salt and pepper. Add fish flesh side down. Cook until opaque and cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Let it rest for 5 minutes and lightly flake with a fork.
3. Serve fish over grilled corn tortilla with corn slaw and avocado. Squeeze lime juice over everything and finish with a dollop of sour cream.



“We are able to bring out the best in clean flavors. We always want to taste the best in everything we cook, and we really do have access to everything in California.

—PAULINE PARRY

SHRIMP ARTICHOKE AVOCADO SALAD

Recipe courtesy Pauline Parry, from *My Culinary Love Story*

INGREDIENTS

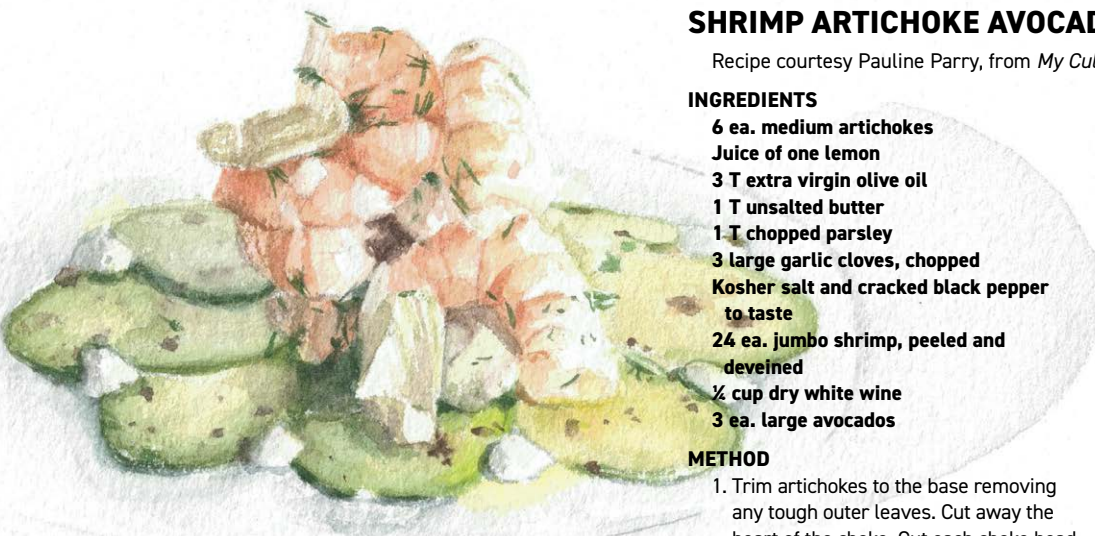
6 ea. medium artichokes
Juice of one lemon
3 T extra virgin olive oil
1 T unsalted butter
1 T chopped parsley
3 large garlic cloves, chopped
Kosher salt and cracked black pepper to taste
24 ea. jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined
½ cup dry white wine
3 ea. large avocados

METHOD

1. Trim artichokes to the base removing any tough outer leaves. Cut away the heart of the choke. Cut each choke head in 8 and place in bowl. Toss with the lemon juice and cover with water. Set aside for 15 minutes. Then drain the artichoke pieces.
2. Heat half the oil in a heavy skillet over

medium heat. Add the artichokes, parsley, and garlic, reduce heat to low and cook, stirring from time to time, about 15 minutes until the artichokes are lightly browned and tender when pierced with a sharp knife. Remove from skillet and cool.

3. Add the remaining olive oil and butter to the skillet and add the shrimp. Season with salt and pepper then add the white wine and cook until the shrimp turns pink and lightly browned on outside.
4. Peel avocado and remove the stone. To plate, thinly slice the avocado and place around the perimeter of the plate. Place the cooked artichokes in center and place cooled shrimp over the artichoke mixture. Swirl a little olive oil over the avocado and finish with salt and cracked black pepper to taste.



CRISPY SALMON

Photo and recipe courtesy Colette's Catering & Events

YIELD: 20

INGREDIENTS

20 ea salmon fillets, 7 oz
5 lb broccolini
4 oz garlic
4 oz extra virgin olive oil
2 oz chili flakes
2 oz salt

Sunchoke Purée (recipe below)
Puttanesca Sauce (recipe below)

METHOD FOR BROCCOLINI

1. Blanch broccolini for two minutes in boiling and salted water.
2. Shock broccolini in iced water to maintain green color and crunchy texture
3. In a pan cook the garlic with olive oil until golden brown and add chili flakes
4. Add broccolini for an additional four minutes and season with salt

INGREDIENTS FOR SUNCHOKÉ PURÉE

1 lb sunchoke, diced
4 oz shallot, minced

1 oz thyme
32 oz heavy cream
1½ oz salt

METHOD FOR SUNCHOKÉ PURÉE

1. Peel and dice sunchoke
2. Sauté the shallot with a drizzle of blended oil
3. Add the thyme springs and diced sunchoke
4. In a pot combine all ingredients and cook with heavy cream with very low heat
5. Remove the sunchoke once tender, and transfer in blender
6. Purée only the sunchoke and shallot with some of the cooking liquid and season with salt

INGREDIENTS FOR PUTTANESCA SAUCE

32 oz San Marzano tomato, sliced
Extra virgin olive oil
6 oz cherry tomato, diced
2 oz garlic, minced
2 oz capers

1 oz anchovy filet, minced
4 oz taggiasca olives
1 oz Italian parsley
Chili flakes
1 tsp salt
1 cup water

METHOD FOR PUTTANESCA SAUCE

1. Purée San Marzano tomato in a blender
2. Sauté garlic with olive oil until golden brown
3. Add chili flakes, parsley, cherry tomato, olives, capers, and anchovy filet and cook for 2 minutes
4. Add San Marzano tomato and a cup of water and cook for 30 minutes at low heat

TO SERVE

1. Sear salmon portion with skin side down until crispy
2. Bake in the oven for 8 min at 375°F
3. Serve with sunchoke puree, sautéed broccolini, and Puttanesca sauce





CORVINA SEA BASS WITH CORN & CALIFORNIA AVOCADO SALSA

Photo and recipe courtesy of UCLA's Bruin Plate Restaurant

INGREDIENTS

3 T extra virgin olive oil
1½ lbs corvina sea bass, cut into 2-ounce pieces
1 T salt
1 T ground black pepper
Aji Amarillo Sauce (recipe follows)
Cilantro Avocado Sauce (recipe follows)
Avocado & Corn Salsa (recipe follows)

INGREDIENTS FOR AJI AMARILLO SAUCE

¾ cup chopped yellow onion
1 tsp chopped garlic
4 tsp grape seed oil
2 T, plus 1 tsp aji amarillo paste
5 T, plus 1 tsp queso fresco cheese
5 T, plus 1 tsp nonfat milk

METHOD

1. Place all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth.

INGREDIENTS FOR CILANTRO

AVOCADO SAUCE

4 cups cilantro
½ tsp aji amarillo paste
1 tsp queso fresco cheese
1 tsp chopped garlic
¾ tsp white vinegar
½ tsp lemon juice
5 T, plus 1 tsp plain yogurt
salt and pepper to taste
1 ea. fresh California Avocado, peeled, seeded

METHOD

1. Place all ingredients except avocado into a blender. Puree until smooth. Add avocado and continue to puree until smooth. Transfer to a squeeze bottle.

INGREDIENTS FOR AVOCADO & CORN SALSA

1 cup roasted corn kernels
¾ cup Fresh California Avocado, peeled, seeded, diced ½"
2 T, plus 2 tsp red onion, diced ½"
1 T, plus 1 tsp cilantro leaves, chopped
½ tsp minced garlic
2 tsp extra virgin olive oil
2 tsp lemon juice
Salt and black pepper to taste

METHOD

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and lightly toss together until well incorporated.

TO ASSEMBLE

1. Preheat a flat top griddle to 350°F. Coat the griddle with the olive oil. Season each piece of fish with ½ tsp. of salt and ½ tsp. pepper. Arrange the 2 oz. pieces of corvina, skin side up, on the griddle. Cook for about 3 minutes or until golden brown. Turn fish pieces and cook for an additional minute or until internal temperature reaches 145°F. Remove from heat.
2. Spoon 2 T of Aji Amarillo Sauce onto each plate.
3. Squeeze a 2 T squiggle of Cilantro Avocado Sauce over the Aji Amarillo Sauce on each plate.
4. Place 1 piece of corvina on top of the sauces on each plate.
5. Garnish each with 2 T of the Avocado & Corn Salsa. Serve immediately.

Lord agrees. "I am a purest at heart when it comes to cooking," Lord says. "I believe that the carrots a farmer put his heart, soul, and all his resources into, should at the end of the day be prepared to taste as close to the warm in the ground perfect carrot the farmer grew. Simply cooked to reflect all that had already gone into that carrot."

Global influences.

In addition to having an emphasis on lighter, seasonal ingredients, California cuisine also celebrates California's melting pot of cultures through a myriad of international influences, including Mexican, Chinese, Japanese, Mediterranean, and Persian.

"Other than the obvious of local, seasonal, and sustainable; if you really break down California cuisine, you will find a lot of international influence," Buchanan says. "Fusion is so woven into the style that it is hard to separate the components. It is not uncommon to find five to six ingredients representing different cultures in the same dish—and it works."

Creative kitchens.

Another indicator of California cuisine is the kitchen itself. Many California chefs embrace the open kitchen concept, where guests can watch their food being prepared. Wood fired grills are also a California cuisine staple.

"We are fortunate we live in California and can be driven by local and sustainable ingredients in our way of cooking," says Pauline Parry, Founder and CEO of Good Gracious! Events (Los Angeles). "Our food is driven by the distinct cultures we have here, which allows us to bring out the best in these clean flavors. We always want to taste the best in everything we cook and we really do have access to everything in California."

Where new meets old

As more culinary styles embrace the farm-to-table movement, California cuisine can sometimes be lost in the mix. However, today's California chefs are starting to look in their rearview mirror for inspiration.

For example, rather than focusing solely on the commonplace international cuisines within California, chefs are looking to their own family histories and cultural identities for culinary influences.

Additionally, indigenous ingredients and practices are starting to come more to the forefront in California cuisine using local grains and probiotics. One restaurant in particular, Café Ohlone (located in Berkeley, CA), incorporates the Ohlone style of indigenous cooking, which honors the Ohlone traditions of gathering food responsibly, sourcing from farmers whose values reflect their own, and cooking what is in season—all hallmarks of California cuisine.

"We're not really doing anything new, just remembering, supporting, and building upon what was the best of the past," says Buchanan. "Farm-to-table should be more than a buzzword."

Let's eat

Since its inception, California cuisine has been instrumental in the rise of many of today's most beloved dishes. For example:

California pizza, developed by Alice Waters and Wolfgang Puck

California pizza is a type of light thin-crust pizza with fresh local ingredients for toppings—artichoke, goat cheese, chicken, avocado. Instead of tomato sauce, sometimes peanut sauce can be used.

Cobb Salad, invented at the Hollywood Brown Derby


One night, the owner of the restaurant came home very hungry; he made himself a dish with whatever he had in the kitchen at that late hour: lettuce, egg, avocado, tomato, chicken, onion, bacon, and blue cheese. Thus, the birth of one of California's signature dishes.

The California Roll, developed in Los Angeles

The California Roll is a fusion between Japanese and Californian cuisine and originated in Los Angeles in the 1960s. The roll is made with rice, cucumber, avocado, and fish, but is rolled inside-out. Practically, a Japanese dish made with American ingredients, in a new fusion style.

While California cuisine, or more generally farm-to-table, will always be homebase for chefs, its lighter cooking styles and vegetable-centric menus, as well as its global mashups and greater emphasis on homegrown menus, continues to evolve.

In closing, here are some final words of wisdom from the mother of California cuisine, Alice Waters:

"Cooking creates a sense of well-being for yourself and the people you love and brings beauty and meaning to everyday life. And all it requires is the common sense to eat seasonally, to know where your food comes from, to support and buy from local farmers and producers who are good stewards of our natural resources," she says. 



Join us in California!

Don't miss your chance to get a taste of true California cuisine during **Catersource + The Special Event**, happening May 2-5 in Anaheim, CA

- Colette's Catering & Events will be catering this year's **Opening Night Party**, which is being held at Muckenthaler Cultural Center.
- The Colony House, owned and operated by 24 Carrots Catering and Events, will host this year's **Leadership Lunch**.
- Dana Buchanan will present **Leading the Scene by Keeping it Green** where she'll discuss tips on producing sustainable events.
- Keith Lord will be presenting two Master Plating sessions: **Scaling from 100 to 4,000** and **On the Line Plating**.
- Pauline Parry's new book, **My Culinary Love Story**, will be available for purchase in the bookstore. She will also be presenting **So, You Want to Write a Book?**

Visit conference.catersource.com for all the details.



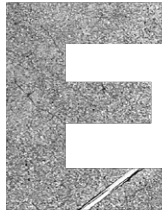


A Crack in the Industry

Seven Event Professionals
Share Their Thoughts on
Mental Health & Substance
Abuse in the Event Industry

With Renee Adams, Reuben Bell, Fausto,
Jamie Lee Quickert, Suzi McMerty Shands,
Terrica, and Melissa Tibben

Photo courtesy Fausto



Editor's note: *For some, this may be a very difficult piece to read. I encourage you to do it anyway. The people who have shared their truth in this article should be respected for their courage in stepping forward. When people share stories like these, it's powerful stuff.*

Should you find yourself struggling with no one to turn to, I would suggest either calling the National Alliance on Mental Illness at 800-950-6264 from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, or in a crisis, text NAMI to 741741 for 24/7 confidential free crisis counseling.

Finally, many of these brave individuals will be at Catersource + The Special Event in May, offering an open dialogue session to discuss how we can support and uplift each other as an industry. A Candid Conversation LIVE on Mental Illness in the Event Industry is open to all attendees who hold education passes for either show. See sidebar for more details.



Behind the enchanting, noisy, multicolored, sometimes chemically enhanced, and wonderful world of events that we all love...is us—the people who make it all happen. We are dedicated, creative, endlessly energetic, and creative visionaries who work tirelessly to make all the glamour look effortless. We are proud of our work and

love the feeling of utter exhaustion and mind-numbing fatigue that we experience as we eat fast food at three a.m. on the drive home. Our families and companions are hours into sleep; our pets notice us with sleepy eyes as we enter the darkness of our homes. We turn on the television to decompress, and then try to follow the rest of the house into slumber until we must wake up and start another day.

This kind of work is gratifying and oddly satisfying in a way that traditional 9-to-5 jobs are not. But at what price do these strange hours and unpredictable highs and lows come to us, and how do we create meaningful personal and professional lives that exist in

a healthy space together when the schedules of those we love are so drastically different? This type of life can leave one feeling a bit like an outsider. Loneliness and a feeling of isolation can settle in early on and can lead over time to unhealthy behaviors that ultimately need to be addressed.

How do we maintain these levels of highs and lows and learn to self-correct and maintain some semblance of sanity as we move through life? Can we successfully support each other in this way?

Do we support each other enough? Or does the time we devote to keeping each other in check shine a light on insecurities of our own that we would rather not examine?

On the next few pages, seven industry professionals will examine these questions based on their own experiences.

Our industry exists to provide experiences for others that create euphoria and extravagance; however, the makers themselves: the muscle and minds behind the magic, are now, more than ever before, struggling to find it themselves."



Renee Adams/ R. Collective

Our industry exists to provide experiences for others that create euphoria and extravagance; however, the makers themselves: the muscle and minds behind the magic, are now, more than ever before, struggling to find it themselves. We surround ourselves with carefully crafted indulgences, and yet the elephant in the ballroom is often that those creating these masterful moments are the ones struggling with mental health, alcoholism, and addiction.

There is a vastly overlooked thread tying together our industry colleagues and mental health disorders, one that has been exacerbated during the current trials we've all faced—but prevalent for decades. While we celebrate the talent, we overlook the trauma it could be causing for the individual and those closest to them. We support the debauchery but shy away from discussing the disease. Many of us have been ravaged by the destruction caused by the deteriorating mental health climate we face ourselves or see affecting our partners, yet the stigma of perfection causes us to pause in sharing our truth.

The impact of the last two years is far broader than our pocketbooks. The onslaught of feelings: worry, fear, anxiety, sadness, and disappointment brought with them a tornado of triggers for mental health disorders and substance abuse, and yet our focus on survival has been heavily financial. Behind the zoom meetings, pivots, and petition signings, people are falling apart at the seams, and others of us are struggling to hold our worlds together entirely. As the pandemic rages on, the necessity to create the perception that

everything is fine and ensure others feel that things are “normal” is neither healthy nor required. Right now, at this moment, there are thousands of emotions to be owned, and not a single one needs to be handled with refinement. It is wholly and completely okay to show your cards for what they are, and while our situations may be different, that doesn't make them petty nor small, no matter what others are going through at the same time.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health, substance abuse, or addiction, please find support. Just as we work together to create our professional masterpieces, we must come together to acknowledge and support each other's personal struggles.





Suzi McMerty Shands/ Mintahoe Catering

I am the co-president of a large catering company with its own set of stress inducers. The fact that I am a woman adds to this. I feel like I must prove myself a little bit more than my male counterparts, or even my co-president, who is male. I frequently feel like I struggle to be taken seriously, particularly within our industry. If a woman is strong, she is a bitch. If she shows emotion, she is falling apart. The same rules, I believe, do not apply to men. This truism lives in the back of my mind every day and definitely affects my mental health. I recently went through a divorce, and while I do not feel that my career caused the divorce, I feel like the specific place

in my life that I found myself in did. This place had a lot to do with my career.

So many people I see in my social media feeds are carefully curated versions of themselves that downplay or hide any actual struggles that they may be going through. These façades make it even harder to face reality when trouble hits. It would be nice to hear colleagues from around the industry share their problems and triumphs in equal measures. We all go through good times and hard times—why are we so focused on highlighting the good times and hiding the hard times? It is unhealthy. Record numbers of people are going into treatment programs right now. Alcohol sales are through the roof. I applaud anyone who can speak their truth and let their hair down. Come and talk to me if you need an ear. I am happy to listen!



Reuben Bell/Blue Elephant Events and Catering/Real Maine Weddings

Substance abuse feels easy to hide when working in the special events industry. You are surrounded by noise and guests and colleagues enjoying what you are trying to avoid. Conference evenings seem like endless nights of dancing, chemicals, and fun. Where you draw your line is up to you, but I found that when the fun started interfering with the rest of my life, I had a problem to deal with. Officially, I am an alcoholic. It feels strange to type it. Today, I look at it like any other thing I need to work on. Sometimes it's a bummer, but I just keep moving forward. Sobriety has changed my life in many ways, mostly good, I think. I don't stay up all night and party anymore. I am a very patient listener. I am good at being around others who are struggling (that is an excellent skill to have sometimes). Conversely, I have noticed that people will find me cold or distant. I'm not really, but that is how sober me translates sometimes. I'm also incredibly impatient at times. Yet, the pros of being sober outweigh the cons for me. Drunk me is hateful and selfish and no fun.

The pressure to work and maintain the façade that you have created while you are

struggling with substance abuse at home and work is overwhelming and impossible in the long term. It becomes a panic-fueled race that you and those close to you—your family, co-workers, employees—all find yourselves in. The finish line is never quite clear, but no one wants to see it. Only when the situation comes to a crisis or one of the participants decides to drop out of the race does the problem get addressed.

Some days are more challenging than others. Some years are more challenging than others. I sailed through the explosion of 2020 with no problem when things were at their worst. It wasn't until 2021 that I found myself struggling. The key to navigating the darkness is to talk about it with those around you. Don't internalize things. Cyndi Lauper once told me that, "healthy people don't self-destruct." I reach for healthy every day, as hard as I can. If you ever want to talk about substance abuse, reach out! Sometimes just talking about it aloud lets enough light in to make a difference.

Fausto/Blue Elephant Events and Catering

I stand before you, scared and frightened. Does imposter syndrome play a part?

So many things worry me these days. I am the partner of an alcoholic. I worry almost every day. Will this be the day that I get a call from the police? Will the business provide for our future collapse because of this awful disease that no one talks about? I worry that I am aging out of my industry. Will people find me relevant after 35 years? Ageism is real, and it creeps into your subconscious more than you know. Trying to keep up in an industry constantly changing with the influx of younger people is exhausting. Drugs, alcohol, and cattiness play a big part in this. We are so busy making other people happy that we forget to make ourselves happy, to the point where we even forget what that means.

I have watched colleagues' businesses collapse with not a word. No one in the industry reached out to offer help. Why are we afraid to attach ourselves to somebody who is hurt, broken, or beaten down? I feel that our responsibility as the stewards of this industry is to put our hands out and hold people up. I'd rather carry you on my shoulders than have you hide your struggle from me.

2020 was a challenging year to live through as we experienced our industry implode.

How much can one person take before breaking? We need to reach out and check on our industry peers. They need us more than anything.

So many of us sit in the darkness with depression, anxiety, and stress. We go to conferences and have a good time, but when we return, the sadness awaits us. These feelings can manifest in substance abuse and other destructive behaviors that lead us further away from where we want to be.

Remember that sometimes behind the laughter, there is a lot of sadness. When was the last time you asked a colleague how they were doing and got an honest answer that started a real conversation?

Jamie Lee Quickert



I did not realize how deeply my career defined me until I lost it. It wasn't just losing my position within my company to COVID; it was watching my entire industry crumble. Over the years, I have worked incredibly hard and built a solid reputation of which I was proud. I never feared for my job. I always knew that if something were to happen, I had successful friends and colleagues who owned businesses around the country that would hire me instantly. I knew that I was good at what I do. They knew I was good at what I do—and that became a significant part of my identity and security. When COVID began to shut down our

industry, I watched my most successful friends tearfully close their doors and lay off their staffs. I realized that no one was safe. No one could rescue me. No one could hire me. It didn't matter how talented or hardworking, or passionate I was. There were no parties to be thrown. The music had died.

It took me a long time to deal with the grief, anger, and depression from losing my job. I felt like I had lost my sense of direction and self-worth. Over time and with help from my friends (and a counselor), I used the time to heal and grow.



Terrica/Cocktails and Details

We're always seen as the invisibles—those who work fervently and tirelessly behind the scenes to make dreams come true. As we endure the heavy lifting of planning throughout the week, we don another hat of magician, therapist, creator, manager, and so much more on production days when we must be “on.” This requires that we turn everything off—the person that cut us off in traffic, the argument with the spouse, the kids not cleaning their rooms, or the pet accident on the floor.

This industry can be tough on its professionals—all people see are the gorgeous events we pull together, not knowing how as we get one couple down the aisle, our marriages are crumbling or how when everyone else is laughing at a joke from the father of a client during a toast, that we're grieving a recent illness or loss of a loved one.

This push to be the best, to be seen here, to be bigger and better silences the fact that we are real people, going through real things—and it can be overwhelming. We lose our shine; we no longer have the same excitement to return calls or attend meetings, we may forget something because our minds have been elsewhere or worse: we snap at those closest to us because of the pressure to be everything for everyone.

We should talk about this more, and we should support each other more, instead of acting as if the dream makers are immune to the trials and tribulations of life.



A Candid Conversation LIVE on Mental Illness in the Event Industry

**Wednesday, May 5
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Featuring:

Fausto

Reuben Bell

Melissa Tibben

Terrica

Suzi McMerty Shands

with moderator **Charessa
Sawyer, MSW, CMP**

This powerful panel of industry professionals will discuss their own paths and solutions, and take questions and comments from the audience.

This session will be presented as a “Bridge” session, meaning it will be available with all conference education passes.

Visit schedule.catersource.com or schedule.thespecialeventshow.com for all the details.



Melissa Tibben/ Total Party Planner

“In my mind, I had lost so many of my catering friends because I no longer had anything to offer. I didn’t know how to ask for help. That’s the thing about those who suffer from mental health issues; we are often self-aware.” – MELISSA TIBBEN


Shortly before COVID hit, I made the decision to sell my shares in one of the best catering companies in Nebraska and move to the East coast.

Before the move, I put myself out there. I was a constant figure on social media. I turned into a selfie queen and live video addict. I was all about my brand and becoming a recognized name and face in our industry. I sat on different industry boards and spoke at and made myself a regular at national conferences. I participated in multiple industry organizations. I wanted to be the best, so I surrounded myself with the best. I felt like I belonged, and I became addicted to the limelight.

I took a position as catering manager at an Airforce base. While I loved what I was doing, I started to feel less and less important in the catering industry. Was I being forgotten by an industry I loved and felt was my home?

Then COVID struck and I lost my job. I was devastated. Was I good at catering, or did I just get by? Was I talented, or was I just well-liked?

I started to feel like I had nothing to offer. Shortly after this, I lost my mother, my grandfather, and a dear catering friend in four months. I contemplated suicide during this time. My physical and mental health went downhill. I was in my early 40s with no kids, no job, poor health, and a husband who didn’t know how to make things better for me no matter how hard he tried. I was bedridden for close to a year. I avoided reality by playing online poker and sleeping. In my mind, I had lost so many of my catering friends because I no longer had anything to offer. I didn’t know how to ask for help. That’s the thing about those who suffer from mental health issues; we are often self-aware.

I’m employed now, and I love my job, but I still struggle with mental illness—I think I always will—but I’m here, and I’m very proud of that. It’s okay to admit you’re struggling. It’s okay not to be okay. But we must remember we do have a purpose, and even though your purpose in life might continue to change, it’s still there. You are still here, wanted, needed, and loved. 

OPENING KEYNOTE:

I Know You're the Boss, But...

with

*Christina
Matteucci*

Executive Director of
David Beahm Experiences

Wednesday, May 4 • 9:00 am

Christina Matteucci pioneers an integral role within the special event industry as Number Two to famed event designer David Beahm. During her session, she will address the singular relationship between Number Ones and their teams from both sides of the coin.

Christina will explore how modeling successful partnerships in the workplace sets a precedent for rewarding collaboration in society and bridges generational divides. She will tackle the most pressing queries she receives from hospitality Principals. Her lecture will also address how she advises emerging professionals making the decision to seek employment underneath the umbrella of a larger company or to branch out and begin their own ventures.

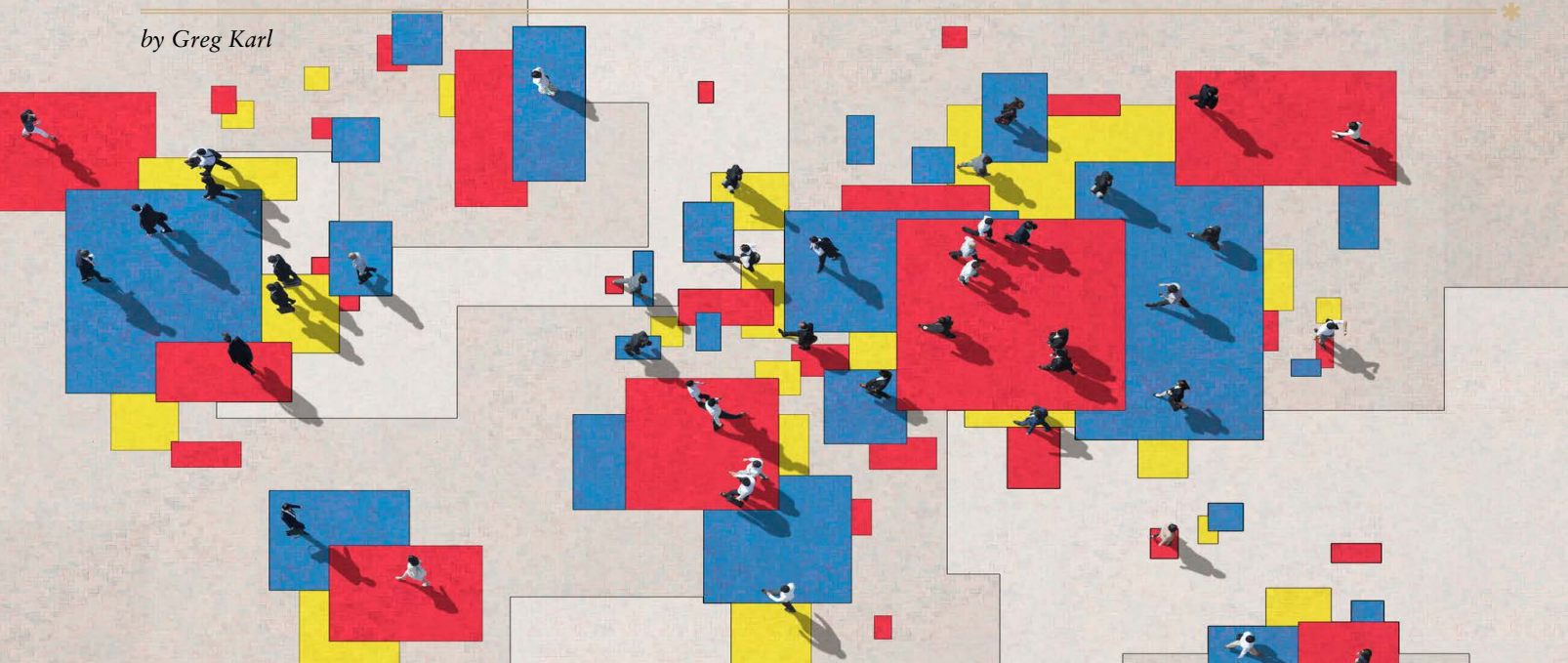


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What are Proactive Hospitality Companies Working On?

Part 3 in the Leading into the Future series

Since 2018 we have been traveling the world, by plane and by zoom, working on development of leadership and leadership team effectiveness. From Pakistan to the Philippines and from Washington State to Washington DC, we continue to find organizations dealing with similar leadership and organizational breakdowns, no matter the industry.

We want to introduce these breakdowns (issues, speedbumps, blockers—the things that hold leaders back) to you because often, as leaders, we just don't see them. Yet to overcome and persevere, we must not only see them, but grow our leadership muscles to overcome them and thrive!

Here's the thing: while many hospitality teams have come together stronger than ever in the pandemic, they are still somewhat resigned and burned out. They are hoping that their industry and clients will return to "normal." They are fearful of the business that is coming and having to do it all again, just in a different way. We are all hoping that our teams will have the energy and passion to push through.

We want to be sure that our clients are not going into these upcoming seasons only relying on hope. Even before "The Great Resignation" we had "The Worldwide Crisis of Employee Engagement." It was already time for businesses to realign, to rediscover, and to reinvest in their people and organizations.

Google Maps as a leadership tool

A key to building strong organizational leadership is to know where you are, where you are going, and how to manage breakdowns that will inevitably

happen to your plan. Think of Google Maps as a leadership tool. Google Maps needs to know exactly where you are and exactly where you want to go. When you start driving, Google Maps is constantly tracking your progress. What happens when you miss a turn, or get a flat tire (what we call a breakdown)? Google helps you recalibrate and recenter. You get back on track to your desired destination.

Specifically, what are our proactive hospitality clients doing?

They are working to define their reality of strengths, opportunities, and aspirations. What internally and externally is blocking their way? They are adding to their leadership toolbox.

They are actively planning, assessing, and recalibrating toward their desired outcome. These leaders and teams are dealing with the same blocks as you and your organization. One of the keys is having awareness that typical organizational blocks do exist and are identified. All business leaders deal with each of the below issues at some point. With this knowledge, you can open up and observe which

of these might be affecting you and your organization.

Do not stay stagnant. Deal with the world as it is, not how you'd like it to be. Open up, come together as a team, define your strengths, find and manage current or potential breakdowns, develop new leadership tools, and develop your leadership muscle.

The enemies of learning: Which of these might be holding your leadership back?

- Our inability to admit that we don't know.
- The desire for clarity all the time
- Lack of priority for learning—"I don't have time."
- An inability to unlearn.
- Ignoring the emotional dimension of learning.
- Confusing learning with acquiring information.
- Not giving permission to others to teach us.
- Lack of trust.

Key organizational breakdowns: Which of these might be holding you back?

- Ownership is not clear on what they really want.
- Ownership doesn't talk to their teams and therefore they don't know if the team desires and shares a promise to a particular future.
- They don't know if they have the "right people in the right seats" to get them there.



Greg Karl is founder of Step Change Leader, 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@certifiedcateringconsultants.com or greg@stepchangeleader.com



HERE'S THE THING: WHILE MANY HOSPITALITY TEAMS HAVE COME TOGETHER STRONGER THAN EVER IN THE PANDEMIC, THEY ARE STILL SOMEWHAT RESIGNED AND BURNED OUT."

- They don't have a clear planning and meeting cadence to define the future and assess if they are on or off track.
- They have fuzzy expectations and then are disappointed when these expectations fall short.

Certified Catering Consultants

Need a quick consultation about some aspect of your business? The Certified Catering Consultants (CCC) will offer free half hour appointments on site during Catersource + The Special Event to address your catering-related challenges, identify your highest value opportunities, and/or help you improve your business and ROI. The CCC team has been consulting with caterers for over 20 years and many of them ran businesses of their own—or still do!

- The leader runs their own planning session because "nobody knows the company as well as I do."
- The organization is unaware of its blind spots because the environment is not safe to discuss them. They hope the issues will magically get better.
- They make excuses for


underperformers instead of letting them go.

- Leaders micromanage and frustrate versus delegate and lead.
- Leaders are fuzzy around commitments and standards for accountability.
- Their management toolbox becomes stagnant, empty, and ineffective.
- There is a lack of commitment to learning. We must learn or be passed by—learn from our mistakes, successes, and experiences, and learn from others in the world, particularly from those who have risked and have experience in success and failure.

What happens when leadership teams address these issues and build their leadership toolbox? By focusing on questions such as these, teams become proactive, focused, lean, and accountable. They become more satisfied and more engaged. Their entire organization gets to work accomplishing "The Most Important Objectives" which will help them survive and thrive.

How are you as an owner, leader, or leadership team addressing these issues so that you have a plan to be proactive, reenergized, and strategic in becoming best-in-class?

Hope is not a strategy. The best predictor of your future behaviors and results are your past behaviors and results. Get curious and have trusting conversations with yourself and your team. Find a coach to push your thought process and be a thought partner with you. Only then can you take new actions toward the results that you say you want.

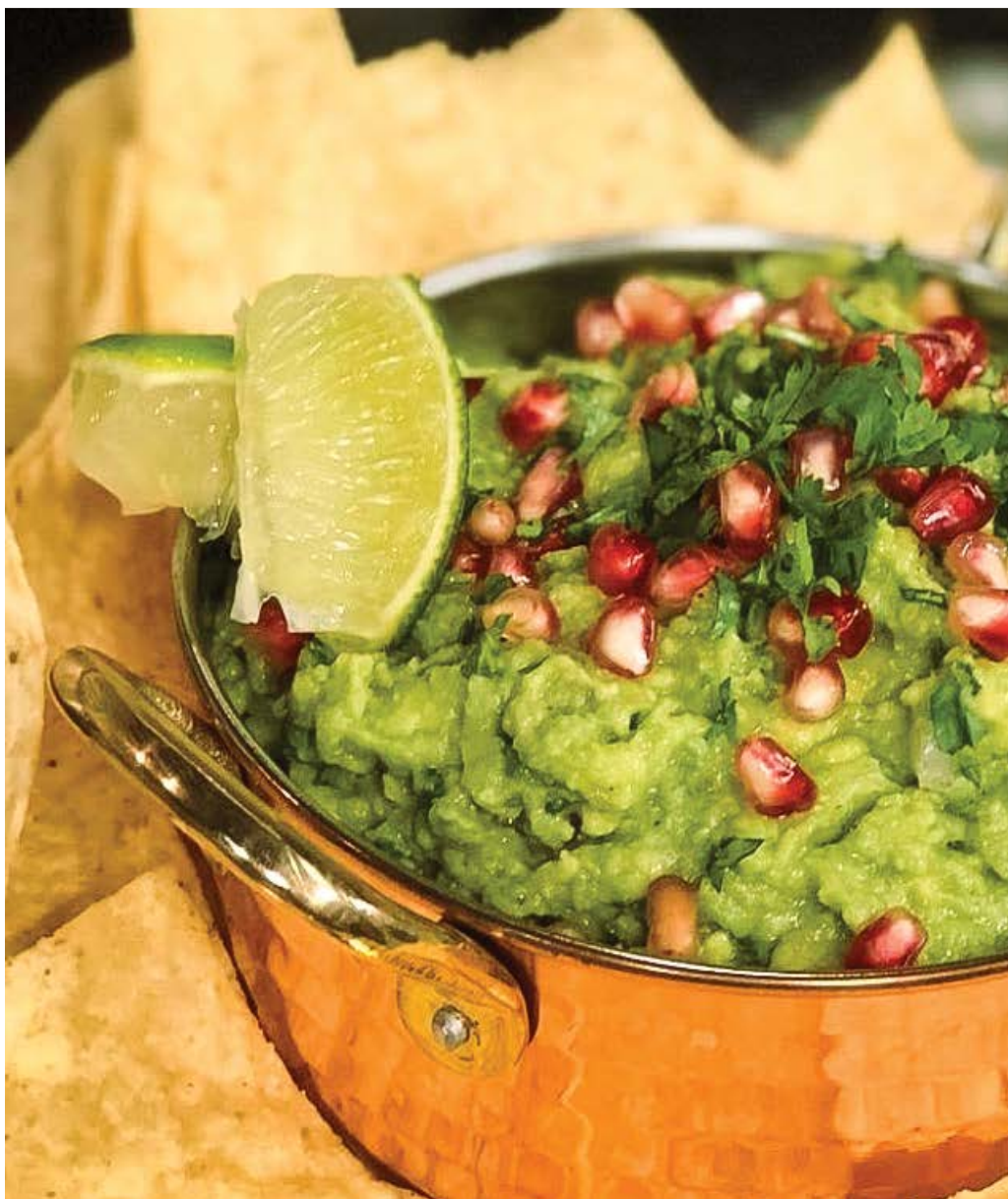
Choose your future. Love your choice. You are choosing either way. 



By Amber Kispert

It's 420 Somewhere

Chef Nettie Frank, with Silver Whisk Catering, hopes to spark interest for infusing CBD into your business



CBD is having a bit of a moment in the kitchen. Chefs are finding unique ways to add CBD-infused oils and tinctures to beverages, sauces and dressings, and even baked goods.

"I am so passionate and excited that CBD is having a movement," says Chef Nettie Frank of Silver Whisk Catering. "This is a natural plant that gives our mind and body the strength and healing it needs. And we all need it more now than ever!"

Join [Chef Nettie](#) this May during Catersource + The Special Event (May 2–5 in Anaheim, CA) as she educates how to safely and healthfully [infuse CBD](#) into foods and beverage as a way to upscale your business and boost profit margins.

"In this industry, the need for happy and healthy minds and bodies is crucial to be at our top performances for



(ABOVE) **CHEF NETTIE FRANK WILL PRESENT** A SESSION ON CBD DURING CATERSOURCE + THE SPECIAL EVENT. (LEFT) CBD POMEGRANATE GUACAMOLE. (RIGHT) FRESH STRAWBERRY MINT SCONES WITH A CBD GLAZE. *Photos courtesy of the chef*

clients and customers,” Frank says.

“I have been cooking and baking with CBD for the past three years. Due to my own health issues that left me full of pain, anxiety, and depression, I was searching for something natural that would help me become myself again! It’s safe for my kids, my parents, and even my dog. Let me help show you quality verses low-end and how to use it and what it can do for you.”

A celebrity chef

What started as a little girl playing with ingredients in her parents’ kitchen has evolved into a nationally sought-after and recognized top chef. Frank has spent almost 20 years in the culinary industry. Frank began her

professional training in 2002 when she attended The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. Then returning to her home state of Utah to work alongside culinary artists at the prestigious Log Haven, the premiere Grand America Hotel, and renowned Snowbasin Ski Resort.

In 2006, Frank stepped out on her own to start Silver Whisk Catering. Providing delectable delights for weddings, corporate events, and high-profile clients. She has provided red carpet fare to celebrities at Project Angel Food in Los Angeles and served the cast of “Will & Grace” at CBS Studios.

Frank launched Beyond Glaze Doughnuts with her father in 2008, winning a Best in Utah Doughnuts award for her gourmet treats that boasted a ‘No Sprinkles Allowed’ philosophy. That’s when she caught the eye of the Food Network, appearing on the first season of “Cake Wars” in 2015 and earning the respect of top



chefs and the adoration of a national audience.


Her on-camera experience doesn't stop there, Frank is also a well-known food stylist working with companies like Frigo Cheese and Santa Monica Seafood, a frequent guest on Utah television shows "Good Things Utah" and BYU's "Dinner Takes All." But her favorite moments are spent where it all started, back in her own kitchen teaching budding chefs on her YouTube channel Chef Nettie Frank.

Cooking with CBD

CBD, which is short for cannabidiol, is said to add an herbal and earthy flavor to dishes, while also helping the body to relax, without the mind-altering effects of THC.

One way to use CBD is to infuse it in olive oil. An added bonus is that the oils can also be infused with other flavors, such as lemon, which will result in a complex fruity flavor profile, with an herbal backbone.

Additional uses for CBD can include: using a CBD-infused oil to top off a salad; add a few drops from a CBD tincture to a beverage; incorporate CBD oils into sauces, like pesto, drizzled over pasta; or used to make a red wine reduction to serve over steak.

Don't miss Chef Nettie Frank during Catersource + The Special Event, and your chance to hear all the buzz about cooking with CBD. 

ORANGE CBD SCONES

INGREDIENTS

1 orange
 ½ cup granulated sugar
 3 ml plus an additional 1 ml CBD (Liv Labs Brand)
 3 cups all-purpose flour
 2 T baking powder
 1 tsp kosher salt
 2 cups heavy cream
 1½ cups powdered sugar

METHOD

- Using a zester zest ¾ of the orange in a large bowl. Add sugar and rub zest and sugar together.
- Add CBD to sugar and zest, rub together.
- Add flour, baking soda and salt to the mixture, stir all together.
- Pour heavy cream on flour mixture and mix until combined. Don't over mix!
- Roll dough out on a lightly floured surface until ½ inch thick. Cut into triangles or desired shape. Place on a parchment lined cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 20-22 minutes.
- Make glaze while waiting for the scones to bake.
- In a small bowl, finish zesting orange and juice the orange. Add powdered sugar and additional CBD, whisk together until it is a creamy glaze. Drizzle on top of hot scones.





EVERYTHING BAGEL CBD CUCUMBERS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ea. English cucumber (or a bell pepper)
- 8 oz whipped cream cheese
- 2 ml CBD (Liv Labs Brand)
- 2 ea. green onions, chopped
- 2 T Everything Bagel seasoning

METHOD

1. Cut cucumber in half lengthwise and core out the seeds, cut into 2-inch pieces.
2. In a medium bowl combine whipped cream cheese, chopped green onions and CBD. Stir until fully mixed together.
3. Spread CBD cream cheese mixture onto cucumbers. Sprinkle Everything bagel seasoning on top.



FRESH CBD PEACH CAPRESE

INGREDIENTS

2 ea. peaches, diced small
8 oz pack fresh mozzarella pearls
2 Roma tomatoes, diced small
10 fresh basil leaves, chopped
2 ml CBD (Liv Labs Brand)
¼ tsp pepper
½ tsp kosher salt
2 T balsamic glaze

METHOD

1. In a medium bowl combine all ingredients. Place on top of toasted bread, grilled chicken or fish.

Want to cook with or drink cannabis?

Besides Chef Nettie Frank's session, [Infuse Your Business Profits with CBD](#), Catersource + The Special Event will offer two sessions looking at how to use its more potent cousin, THC.

- [Cannabis & Hospitality - How to safely and legally incorporate cannabis in events](#), presented by Tomer Grassiani, Grassfed

An overview guide on how to incorporate legal cannabis into events, covering everything from picking the right venue, to selecting the appropriate products for the occasion, to insurance, liability, and staffing. Providing you all the

tools to oversee a classy, safe, and responsible cannabis experience for everyone at the event.

- [Cannabis Drinks - A new and exciting way to experience weed](#), presented by Dan Braunstein, Grassfed

Drinks and events are historically intertwined. Everyone wants to hold a drink in their hand whether they are mingling, watching a live show, dancing, etc. With cannabis legalization on the rise, and over 21 states which approved adult use, you can also drink your cannabis (rather than smoking or eating it). With exciting new technologies and

trends such as fast acting THC, minor cannabinoids, terpenes (which give cannabis its flavor and unique smells) there are plenty of ways, and flavors to drink your weed. Whether you are an alcohol drinker who is seeking a healthier alternative, or a cannabis smoker who is looking for a healthier consumption method, cannabis drinks are the newest and hottest trend in the industry.

Catersource + The Special Event will be held May 2-5 in Anaheim, CA. Visit conference.catersource.com for all the details.



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TUESDAY, MAY 3:

ICA Inspiration Zone

(Outside Catersource Classrooms)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4:

ICA Tradeshow

Booth #1733

THURSDAY, MAY 5:

ICA Tradeshow

Booth #1733



Let's Talk about Culture

As business comes roaring back for the hospitality industry and companies scramble to hire enough team members to keep up with demand, the need to focus on culture is more important than ever before. **2022 is shaping up to be an incredible year for almost all the catering companies I've spoken with and the biggest concern I hear is the ability to retain and attract talent.**

A great company culture is essential to doing both of those things and is at the center of what will differentiate the experience of companies in 2022. There will be plenty of business out there for those who want it, but those

who make culture a priority will find it much easier to navigate this recovery, while those who struggle with culture are in for a bumpy ride that will undoubtedly cause frustration, exhaustion, and the proverbial feeling of “spinning their wheels.”

Thanks to the tech industry, most people hear “culture” and think ping pong tables and beer fridges. While those can be components of culture, they are miniscule in comparison to the things that truly make a great place to work. Culture is much more about the way in which your company operates, how people treat one another, how team members feel about their work, and the direction the company is heading. Here are a few things that companies are facing now and some suggestions on how to approach them.

Burnout is real, but it's not about hours

Have you ever worked on a project for hours and afterward felt energized, fulfilled, and accomplished? On the flip side think of a time where you worked for an hour on a project that absolutely drained you. Many employees are feeling burnout right now, not because they've had to work a ton of hours over the past couple of years, they are feeling burnout because they are having to do work that doesn't fill them up. When companies were forced to downsize, the people left standing had to pick up the pieces and fill roles that they weren't accustomed to doing. This was okay in the short term under the guise of “let's all get through



CORE VALUES ARE A CRITICAL PIECE OF CULTURE; HAVING THEM IS THE FIRST STEP, LIVING BY THEM IS WHAT REALLY MATTERS.”

this,” but as business picks up and companies struggle to hire, there is a heavy workload on some team members that need to get back into the positions where they thrive. When we use our strengths, we are more efficient, happier, and more fulfilled. Companies must focus on making sure that their people are in the right positions that allow them to use those strengths and be diligent about hiring others that can fill the vacant positions. Otherwise, they risk becoming a statistic of the Great Resignation.

Are you consistent with your core values?


Core values are a critical piece of culture; having them is the first step, living by them is what really matters. Many things have changed because of COVID, and it may take some time for you to revisit your core values. Getting clear on what they are and what they mean will help you communicate to your team why decisions are being made and provide direction as to where the company is going. As new team members are brought on, they must be integrated into your culture and the best way to do that is through core values, so they understand what type of behavior is expected. As you do this, make sure you can be consistent with them. It is counterproductive and even detrimental to have a core value that you cannot live by. Actions speak louder than words and it undermines your credibility as a leader when you say one thing and do another. I do not think companies do this intentionally, but they fall into the trap of trying to do it all. At some point you must decide what is most important and draw a line in the sand. Take for

example customers vs. employees; both are important and there is not a right answer here to which is more important; it is specific to each company. But if you say employees are the most important thing, then you must be willing to say no to customers in order to protect your team. I spoke to employees from one team who said their company promised balance to everyone and agreed not to take Sunday morning events so that their team could recover from the week and late Saturday nights. Then four weeks in a row they took on small events because it was for a “great customer.” I’m not criticizing the company for taking the small events, I’m just pointing out the inconsistency that causes frustration among team members.

How do I find the time to focus on culture?

Culture is not something that you work on in the slow season and then put on the backburner when things get busy. Culture is something that you must work on and protect throughout the entire year. A mentor of mine once told me, “We have time for whatever we want to do, we make time for what is important.” If culture is going to be a focal point for you, then you have to be disciplined enough to carve out

time to work on it each week. Start with something manageable, maybe it’s 30 minutes, it may be an hour, but do something to be intentional about where you want your culture to go. If you just focus on making it a little better every day, you’ll be well on your way to a much smoother 2022.

I’m looking forward to diving deeper into the culture discussion during my sessions at Catersource this year. I hope to see you there!. 

See Anthony Lambatos at Catersource + The Special Event

Don’t miss any of [Anthony Lambatos’ sessions](#) during Catersource + The Special Event this May. On Tuesday, May 3 at 4:00 p.m., he will present [State of the Industry: Workplace Culture](#), where he will share the best ways to design culture in order to retain and attract top talent. He will also provide insight into where the industry currently stands, what employees want and what lies ahead.

Get all the details at conference.catersource.com.



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.



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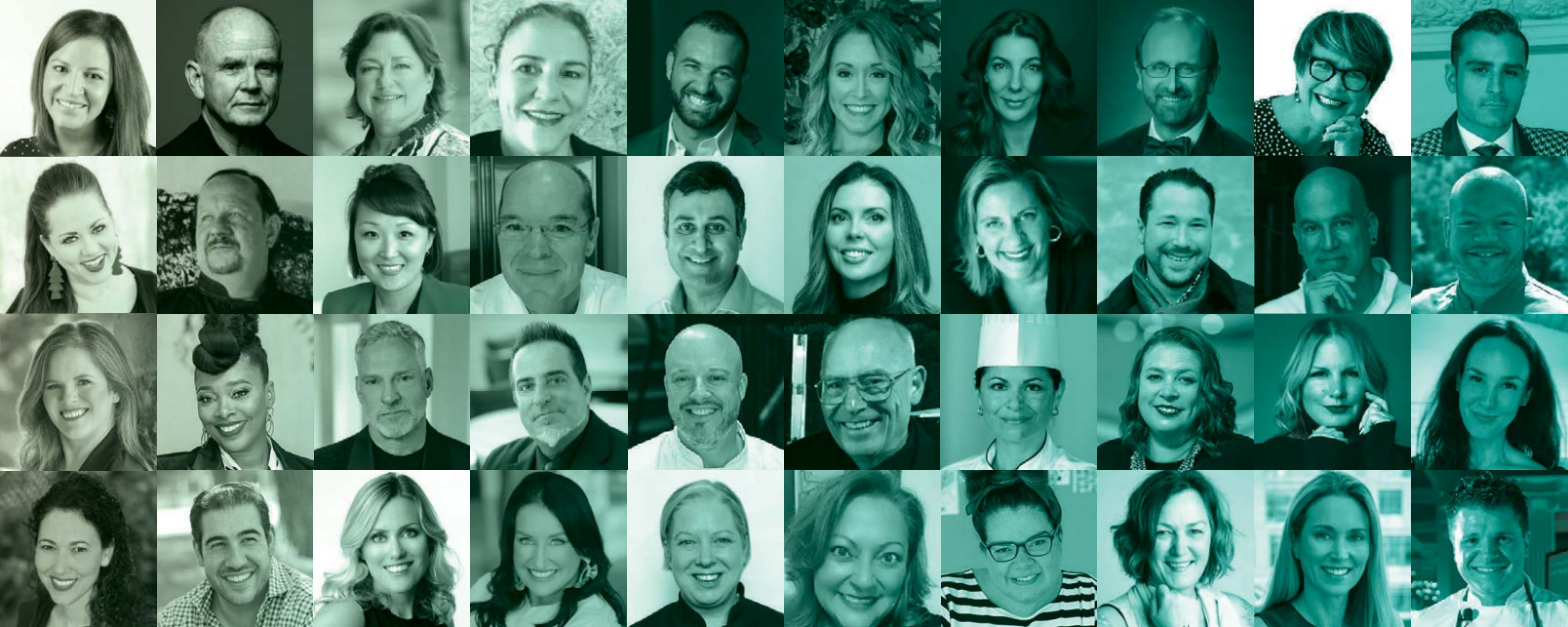
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Catersource + The Special Event will provide the catering and event industry with an unmatched opportunity to learn the new skills needed to succeed. **Learn from these experts** and be part of the new era of catering and events!




Wednesday, May 4 • 9:00 a.m.
Opening General Session Keynote Speaker
Christina Matteucci
Executive Director, David Beahm Experiences





Cali.

Here We
Come



For nearly 30 years, Catersource has served as an educational resource and expansive network for the catering and special events industries. As the industry continues to work its way through one of the toughest times in its history, the need to gather and learn from one another, network, and celebrate is important! Join Catersource, co-located with The Special Event, as we celebrate the rise of the resilient catering and events industry!

Don't miss a moment!
Arrive Monday afternoon 5/2, depart Friday morning 5/6

When making your travel arrangements, plan to arrive by Monday afternoon so that you can enjoy the entire Catersource + The Special Event experience!

Kick off your week by attending **Connect Live**, held at The Ranch, starting at 7:30 p.m. and ending at 10:30 p.m. End your week by joining us at the **Closing Night Celebration**.

In between, you won't want to miss a thing.

Here's a look at all that will be offered!



Revolutionary Keynote

FOR SOME PEOPLE, BEING CALLED “NUMBER TWO” would not necessarily be exhilarating. Not for Christina Matteucci. Also affectionately known as TeucciMama: The Mother Hen of the Number Twos, the Executive Director of David Beahm Experiences, former actor, speaker, and opening keynote for this year’s Catersource + The Special Event, Matteucci thrives in her position as second in command—or as she puts it, “number-one-adjacent”—to the legendary visionary, David Beahm.

Via Special Events magazine, we caught up with Matteucci to learn more about why she believes being second really makes a person second to none. For the full interview, go to [page 22](#) in the adjacent issue of Special Events.

Special Events: For the number-ones among us, what are some of secrets your number-two will never tell you?

Matteucci: One secret that your number two will never tell you is that we challenge you because we believe in bettering what we already have, like how a diamond doesn’t come out of the earth perfectly polished—it needs abrasion. Part of that abrasion is being able to manage up and mentor your number one, but also being receptive as a number two to the mentorship that your number one is bringing you.

The other big secret is that you might have invented the next best thing since sliced bread, but that’s not your legacy. Your legacy is the team that you build, because that team is going to not only carry your vision through to fruition, but also carry it forward.

The greatest achievement is if you can build a team that thinks like you but challenges you and fights for you and pushes through for you in the most difficult times because every person working there shares the same ethos and values. It’s the “why” of what you do is what matters. And if the why is to create an amazing community that’s about legacy and about teaching and about developing and moving forward, then that’s the team that’s going to be a success.



CHRISTINA
MATTEUCCI

9:00 a.m. Wednesday, May 4

See Christina Matteucci LIVE

AT THE OPENING GENERAL SESSION ON THE TRADESHOW FLOOR. Matteucci will kick off the 2022 Catersource + The Special Event conference and tradeshow with her session, “I Know You’re the Boss, but...” High energy, deeply embedded in our industry, and inspiring, Matteucci, will leave you with actionable takeaways on **Wednesday morning, May 4 at 9:00 a.m.** The Opening General Session is included in the purchase of any pass, from All Access to tradeshow only.

tes



ROY CHOI

9:00 a.m. Thursday, May 5

ROY CHOI WAS BORN IN SEOUL, KOREA and raised in Los Angeles, California. One of the architects of the modern food truck movement through Kogi BBQ, Choi merges food and social media with community, honoring the street food culture that laid the path before him.

Host of the civic-minded Emmy Award winning series 'Broken Bread' on KCET/Tastemade, which won him a James Beard Foundation Award in 2020 for Outstanding Host in a television series, Choi challenges the status quo, meeting with inspiring individuals and organizations who use food as a platform for activism and a catalyst for change.

Choi spoke about one of his initial successes, Chego!, in a recent episode of 'Broken Bread' (Season 2, episode 4, Returning to Chinatown), and how it changed his mindset. "I didn't know opening a small 500 square foot rice bowl restaurant in [Los Angeles] Chinatown would spark a food movement that pushed a lot of people out. I was not really thinking about what the implications would be or what disparities existed. Almost 10 years later I realize that [restaurant] gentrified the town. At that time, it was hard for me to see the forest through the trees.

There are people here and if in some way, I'm part of the recipe of the displacement of Chinatown residents...I want to stand up and do something about it.

"I'm a street cook. Even before I was a street cook, I was a street person. My whole existence in this world is to nourish and feed people," says Choi.

On a global scale, Choi is co-host in the full blown Netflix cooking series 'The Chef Show' with Jon Favreau. He is also a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America.

In 2010, Food and Wine magazine named him Best New Chef. His cookbook/memoir L.A. Son was a New York Times Bestseller in 2013. In 2016 he was named TIME 100 Most Influential People in the World. And in 2017, LocoL in Watts, received the first ever Los Angeles Times Restaurant of the Year award.

Choi resides in Los Angeles where he is a voice and advocate for street food culture past, present, and future, and the co-owner, co-founder, and chef of Kogi BBQ, Chego!, Best Friend at Park MGM Las Vegas, and LocoL.

CLOSING GENERAL SESSION, "In Conversation with...Roy Choi" will be May 5, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. on the tradeshow floor

"I'm a street cook. Even before I was a street cook, I was a street person. My whole existence in this world is to nourish and feed people."



Top notch culinary

If you hope to expand your culinary operations in 2022 and beyond, there is a terrific line up of chef-forward classes available on the Culinary Experience stage at Catersource and Culinary & Keynote stage on the tradeshow floor. Chefs will not just talk about their concepts, they'll demonstrate them, too. You can also participate in hands on classes that will help boost your skills in a variety of areas. Plus, some of the recipes produced on the Culinary Experience stage will be available for sampling in the second floor networking lounge.

Gain access to trending recipes, learn the basics of breakfast, get insight into how to shake up your bar program, get inspired with unconventional serving styles, and discover superstar short plates and late night noshes—these are just a few of the culinary classes you will experience.



(TOP) **IRINOX** DEMONSTRATED ITS BLAST CHILLERS ON THE CULINARY AND KEYNOTE STAGE (ON THE TRADESHOW FLOOR) DURING THEIR SPONSORED SESSION "BLAST CHILL TECHNOLOGY," PRESENTED BY CORPORATE CHEF JEFF BIGNELL (LEFT).

(ABOVE) BUFFET BUILDING AND DISPLAY STATIONS TOOK CENTERSTAGE DURING CHEF **GREGORY'S TAYLOR'S** SESSION ON THE CULINARY EXPERIENCE STAGE LAST YEAR. THIS YEAR, BORIS SEYMORE WILL LOOK AT HOW TO "UPSELL YOUR EVENT WITH BESPOKE BUFFETS."

Photos courtesy, WTA Photos via SpotMy Photos

Certified Catering Consultants

Need a quick consultation about some aspect of your business? The Certified Catering Consultants (CCC) will offer free half hour appointments on site to address your catering-related challenges, identify your highest value opportunities, and/or help you improve your business and ROI. The CCC team has been consulting with caterers for over 20 years and many of them ran businesses of their own—or still do! Head to room 262 to sign up



HAVE A CANDID CONVERSATION WITH **CeCe TODD** DURING THIS YEAR'S SHOW. Photo courtesy WTA
Photos via spotmy photos.

for a free consultation during show hours Tuesday through Thursday.

Candid conversations

Always a favorite, Candid Conversation sessions are free-wheeling “unsessions”—no set agenda or full on Powerpoint presentations; just an industry professional at the front of the room, ready to answer your questions about topics they excel at. Put the **Footers Catering team** in the hot seat; ask **CeCe Todd** (shown above) your burning questions about her turn on HGTV's ‘Table Wars’; **Alan Berg** is ready to talk marketing and sales; **Alicia Schiro** shares the secrets to her success as a small business making large money; and don't miss this year's panel on mental health featuring **Reuben Bell, Fausto, Chaessa Sawyer, Suzi McMerty**

Shands, Mellissa Tibben and Terrica. Your questions—their answers. The learning is fun and organic; these sessions are often identified as some of the most popular, year after year.

Discover ideas on the tradeshow floor

The award-winning tradeshow floor will offer a plethora of trendsetting and relevant exhibitors and sponsors for you to browse, learn from, taste samples and buy from. These exhibitors are here to help you grow your business and recognize the potential you have for 2022 and beyond.

Additionally, a culinary competition, and the excitement of the Opening General Session with keynote Christina Matteucci open the first day of the tradeshow floor, with the return of the Swizzle competition and Closing Session with keynote Roy Choi on Thursday.



Industry accolades: award recipients

Each year, we honor industry leaders who we, at Catersource + The Special Event, feel have made a significant and positive impact on our industries. Join us in celebrating these remarkable individuals at our annual **Leadership Lunch on Thursday, May 4** at 24 Carrots Catering and Events' The Colony House. Enjoy a beautiful lunch with your colleagues and peers, and celebrate with



recipients **Rosemary Kowalski** (Michael Roman Lifetime Achievement award); **Kelly Murphy** (Richard Carbotti Gala award) and **Lenny Talarico, CSEP, CHE** (Special Events Gala Lifetime Achievement award), as well as the **surprise award recipient of the Steve Kemble award**.

Catersource + The Special Event 2022 will also mark the return of the annual **ACE, Gala, and ICA CATIE Awards**, which will be presented at the **Opening Night Party on Tuesday, May 3**. Turn to page 64 to see this year's ACE Award nominees.





Food Truck Roundup!

Join your colleagues Tuesday afternoon from noon to 1:15 p.m. outside the Anaheim Convention Center on the Arena Plaza. Soak in the California sunshine, go over your afternoon conference schedule, network, and enjoy local chef-owned and operated artisan food trucks!



Enchanting evening events

Every evening features a different venue and event theme, all developed to bring you the latest trends in a setting that also grants you the time and space to connect with friends, peers, and colleagues.

MONDAY MAY 2 • THE RANCH

CHAIR: Tracy Evans-Bowles, Flawless Weddings & Events

On Monday evening, head to The Ranch for an exciting opener to the week. As you arrive into town, join us for “California Dreaming!” Connect and network as we highlight a few of Southern California’s iconic cities and landmarks.

TUESDAY MAY 3 • MUCKENTHALER CULTURAL CENTER

CHAIRS: Rosemary Vera & Sarah Kuhlberg, Colette’s Catering & Events

The Opening Night Party at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center, will take you on a journey through Southern California. It’ll be a culinary and event experience that explores the richness of Orange County, the excitement and energy of Los Angeles, and the art deco styling of Palm Desert. Enjoy wine bars, beer gardens, bonfires, and regionally inspired cuisine.

WEDNESDAY MAY 4 • HOUSE OF BLUES ANAHEIM

CHAIRS: Dina Morales & Amy Sleeper, Haute

At **The Event Experience**, you will be immersed in an event trends showcase inside a staging, lighting, and sound state-of-the-art venue. Lively bars coupled with cozy nooks make this event space a prime networking haven.

THURSDAY MAY 5 • MARRIOTT ANAHEIM

CHAIR: Jenniffer Bello, JB Experiences

Celebrate with colleagues amidst an entertainment-filled experience as we wrap up a great week for our industry during the Closing Night Celebration. Casual attire welcome.

Associations & groups

Associations and groups (some of them new to the conferences) will be present at Catersource + The Special Event, many of which will also have booths on the tradeshow floor and/or in the conference area. Take the time to seek these people out and learn more! We are all in this together and hope to learn from each other. Here is a look:

- **Association for Wedding Professionals International (AFWPI)**
- **Black in Events (BIE)**
- **Certified Catering Consultants (CCC)**
- **California Events Coalition (CEC)**
- **International Caterers Association (ICA)**
- **International Caterers Association Educational Foundation (ICAEF)**
- **International Live Events Association (ILEA)**
- **Leading Caterers of America (LCA)**
- **National Society of Black Wedding & Event Professionals**
- **SEARCH Foundation**
- **Wedding International Professionals Association (WIPA)**



FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES
CAN GATHER TOGETHER
DURING ALL OF THE EVENING
SHOWCASING EVENTS.

*Photos courtesy WTA Photos
via SpotMy Photos*



Networking opportunities

Beyond the evening events and Tuesday morning welcome gathering, pass time has been increased between sessions to allow more opportunity to say hello and move between tradeshow floor and conference rooms. Most sessions allow 30 minutes pass time. Additionally, join your friends outside on Tuesday at lunch time for a California-style food truck round up, enjoy time with peers in our two conference-area networking spaces, and buy a ticket to our Thursday Leadership Lunch at 24 Carrots Catering and Events' beautiful venue, The Colony House, to discuss high level ideas with peers.

Earn education credits

Continuing education is an important aspect of any career trajectory and Catersource + The Special Event is ready to help.

**All classes have been approved
for CMP (Certified Meeting
Professional) credits**



Go to "Associations & Accreditations" on the left-hand rail on schedule.catersource.com and sort to find what you need!

Schedule at a Glance

MONDAY

Venue/Culinary Tour

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Connect Live at The Ranch

7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

TUESDAY

Conference education

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Food Truck Roundup

Noon to 1:15 p.m.

ACE/Gala/CATIE awards

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

**Opening Night Party at
Muckenthaler Cultural Center**

7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Opening General Session 9:00
a.m. to 10:00 a.m. (doors at 8:30
a.m.)

Tradeshow floor 10:00 a.m. to
5:00 p.m.

Conference education

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**The Event Experience at House of
Blues**

6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

**SEARCH's Annual Signature
Event**

9:30 p.m. to Midnight

THURSDAY

Closing Keynote Chef Roy Choi

9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. (doors at
8:30 a.m.)

Tradeshow floor 10:00 a.m. to
5:00 p.m.

Conference education

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Leadership Lunch at The Colony
House**

11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

**Closing Night Celebration at
Marriott Anaheim**

7:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

AND THE NOMINEES ARE...

**Let's give a round of applause to this year's
ACE Award nominees!**

by Amber Kispert

The Achievement in Catering Excellence (ACE) Awards may have taken a backseat to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, but now they're back!

Catersource magazine is delighted to announce the nominees for the 2022 ACE Awards, which will be handed out during Catersource + The Special Event May 2-5 in Anaheim, CA. Special Events magazine will also be handing out its Gala Awards. Turn to [page 40](#) in the adjoining magazine for this year's nominees.

Without any further ado, please congratulate your 2022 ACE Award nominees!

ACE
Achievement in Catered Events



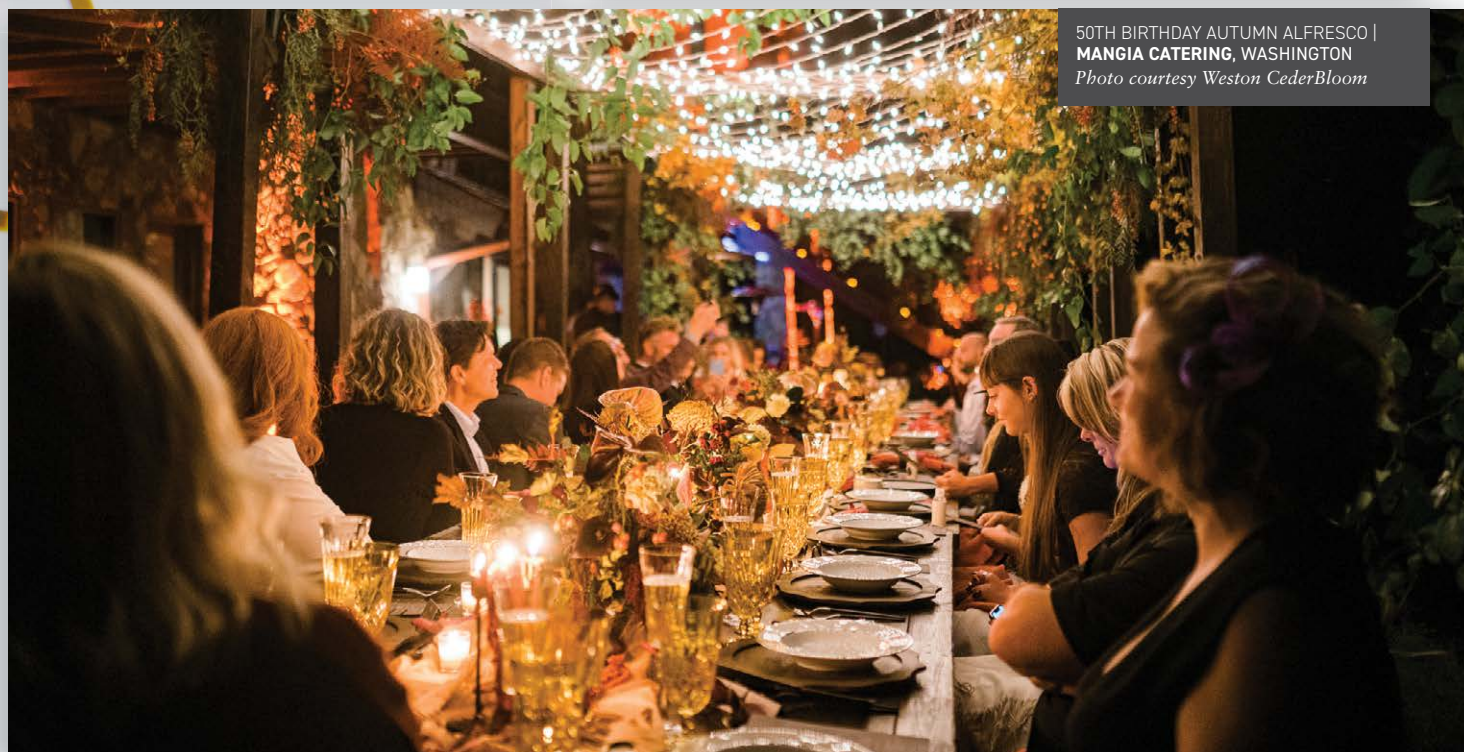
BEST OFF-PREMISE CATERING



**FANDANGO! ALTA CALIFORNIA | 24 CARROTS
CATERING AND EVENTS, CALIFORNIA**
Photo courtesy Annie White Photography



**AN UNSINKABLE CREW |
DSQUARED HOSPITALITY
COMPANY, SEATTLE**
*Photo courtesy Brandon Patoc
Photography*



**50TH BIRTHDAY AUTUMN ALFRESCO |
MANGIA CATERING, WASHINGTON**
Photo courtesy Weston CederBloom

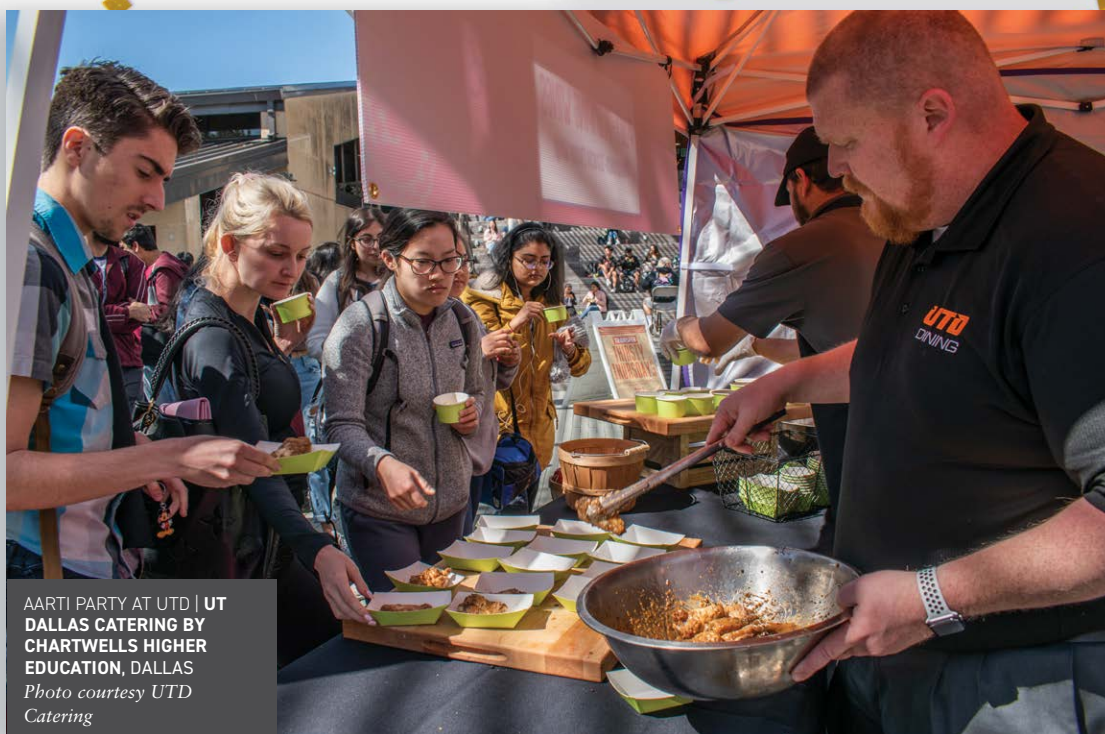
BEST ON-PREMISE CATERING



A UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTIAL
INAUGURATION |
CHARTWELLS, OKLAHOMA
*Photo courtesy Chef
Melodie Thornton*

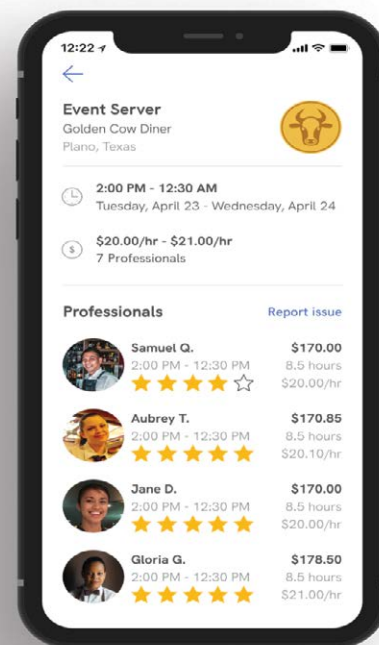


BACK TO THE CLUB
COVID SAFE STYLE |
**DETROIT ATHLETIC
CLUB (DAC), DETROIT**
*Photo courtesy Sherri
Perez*



AARTI PARTY AT UTD | **UT
DALLAS CATERING BY
CHARTWELLS HIGHER
EDUCATION, DALLAS**
*Photo courtesy UTD
Catering*

BEST INNOVATION



INSTAWORK | INSTAWORK,
SAN FRANCISCO
Photo courtesy Instawork



Four Steps to Stronger Sales in 2022 & Beyond

Sales have always been an integral part of a successful business, but the pandemic has created a defining moment that sets great salespeople apart from the rest. No longer is it a simple matter of speaking to benefits and touting accolades to win a sale; instead, customers expect a deeper relationship when investing significant time and money into a company.

While the quality of an offering used to be the sole deciding factor, the market has changed, and consumers now demand businesses to view them as more than just potential revenue.

Thus, in 2022 and beyond, the most successful salespeople will be those that actively build relationships with prospective clients from the very first touch-point long before a contract is signed. It's time to adapt your sales techniques to a post-pandemic landscape where buyers are more intentional about where they put their money.

Follow these strategies to level up your sales approach and prepare for the uncertain road ahead.

Fix the leaks in your sales funnel.

Whether optimizing your sales approach or your client experience, auditing the

situation is always the best way to start. Otherwise, you run the risk of implementing new strategies that don't solve your problems (or worse—getting rid of ones that work).

It only takes a few mistakes or gaps in your process to turn a potential success into a failure. By shining a light on your current sales strategies, you'll learn your strengths and weaknesses, so you can adjust accordingly. For example, if you think about selling benefits instead of features, you'll find more insight into the value your business has to offer. You just have to think differently!

Learn more during my session at Catersource + The Special Event in May: [*Ten Selling Mistakes You Don't Know That You're Making*](#).

Create a sales plan.

Once you're armed with the knowledge of what works and what



by Meryl Snow

doesn't, you can start looking ahead and thinking about the actions that will position you for sales success. Consider a reasonable monthly sales goal and how you can hit it consistently without significantly increasing your expenses. More often than not, a simple increase in your closing ratio can make all the difference, so start planning an approach that involves more sales activity.

For many caterers, it's not about learning how to sell but rather figuring out when to sell. Time is often the scarcest resource, so time management should be a critical component of your sales plan. It could mean automating certain processes to find more time to actively sell or you may be ready to build a sales team that can dedicate their undivided attention to finding and booking new customers. Figure out what you need to do to reach the next stage in your business.

Learn more during my session at Catersource + The Special Event in May: *Grow Your Sales — NOW!*

Build stronger sales skills.

Your sales plan should build motivation for you and your sales team, but successful implementation relies on exceptional sales skills. Otherwise, you can get used to seeing prospects walk out the door and book with competitors. Learning how to sell isn't just about making more money—an effective salesperson becomes a powerful influencer not just in their business, but in their industry as a whole.

One attribute of a sales superstar is the propensity to sell features instead of benefits. They know that people make purchasing decisions based on perceived value rather than specifications, so they focus on highlighting the transformative

experience they offer rather than a punch list of standard features everyone gets from their services.

Learn more during my session at Catersource + The Special Event in May: *Think Like a Salesperson: Act Like a Chum- Developing the Right Skill Set.*

**IT'S TIME TO ADAPT
YOUR SALES
TECHNIQUES TO A POST-
PANDEMIC LANDSCAPE
WHERE BUYERS ARE
MORE INTENTIONAL
ABOUT WHERE THEY PUT
THEIR MONEY."**


Set meaningful sales goals.

Sales is the driving force behind every business, but without goals in place, it could drive your business right off a ledge. Whether you're a solopreneur or you manage a team of many, a common goal serves as a rallying point for everyone in your business.

Meaningful sales goals must create value for the client, the company at-large, and the salespeople. In today's competitive marketplace, goals are essential for building a game plan

to sell big, produce results, measure success, and scale a business for years to come.

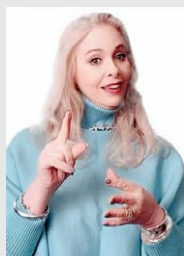
Learn more during my session at Catersource + The Special Event in May: *Focused Sales Activity = Positive Sales Performance.*

As we navigate the late stages of the pandemic and forecast what lies ahead, the ever-changing nature of the market calls for all event pros to revisit their sales approach and optimize their strategic plan. Even those who have sold millions in revenue can be left behind if they don't adapt their tactics to modern demands. Make 2022 the year of sales in your business, and you will be ready to weather anything that comes your way. 

See Meryl Snow LIVE!

You can see [Meryl Snow](#) live and in-person during Catersource + The Special Event, May 2-5 in Anaheim, CA.

Visit schedule.catersource.com or thespecialeventshow.com for all the details on her sessions.



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 industry speaker, she speaks with groups from the heart with warmth and knowledge, and covers the funny side of life and business.

STEAL THIS



Fresh ideas to use or adapt at your next event.



A SIGN OF WHAT'S TO COME

They may seem trivial, but the small details make all the difference during an event. Whether it's the menus on the table, guests' place cards, or simply signage at the action station, these small additions are tremendously helpful to staff (who gets the vegetarian meal?) and guests (where is my table?) alike, while also helping to reinforce the event's aesthetic. Here are a few ideas that you can bring to your next event.

—Amber Kispert

▼ 24 Carrots Catering and Events | Signage

Photo courtesy 24 Carrots Catering and Events



G Catering | Passed Appetizer Tray sign

Photo courtesy G Catering



Beyond the Box Catering | Table number

Photo courtesy the Grand Romantic



◀ Blue Plate
Catering | Menu

Photo courtesy
Blue Plate
Catering



◀ Chartwells Higher Ed | Menu

Photo courtesy Chartwells Higher Education



▲ Beyond the Box Catering | Menu

Photo courtesy Andrea Elizabeth
Photography



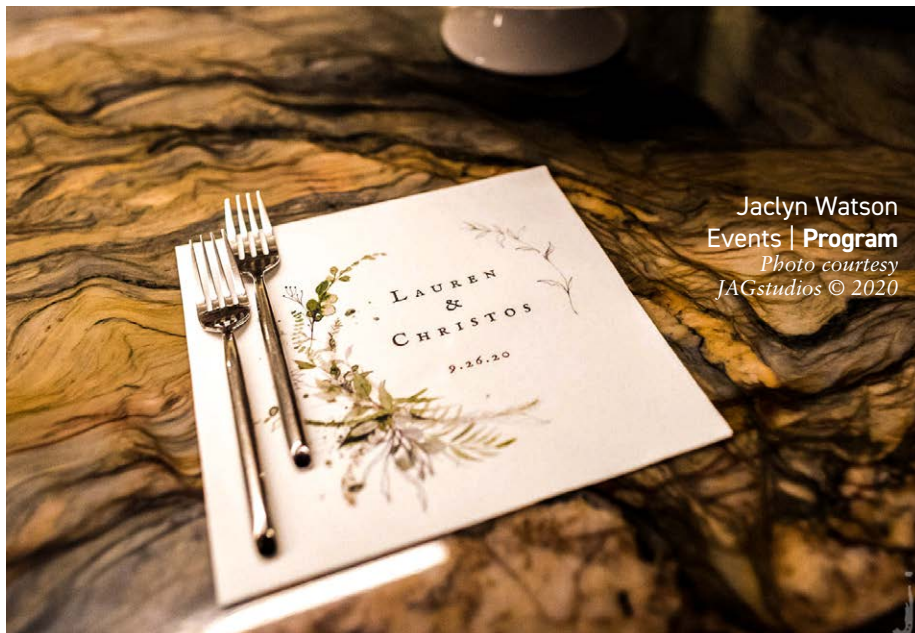
▲ Grande Affaires, A Social Division of DECO Productions | Signage

Photo courtesy Mandy Lynn Photography



Taste Catering |
Beverage sign

Photo courtesy Filoli



Jaclyn Watson
Events | Program
Photo courtesy
JAGstudios © 2020



▲ Brancato's Catering & Events | Menu
Photo courtesy Brancato's Catering & Events

▲ Bridal Bliss | Menu
Photo courtesy Erich McVey Photography

▲ Beyond the Box Catering | Table numbers
Photo courtesy Cherie Callaway Photography



Detroit Athletic Club | Signage
Photo courtesy Detroit Athletic Club



▲ Beyond the Box Catering | Menu
Photo courtesy Harthall Lane Photography

◀ Ellwed | Menu
Photo courtesy Ellwed





▲ Rosemary's Catering | Seafood Station sign

Photo courtesy Rosemary's Catering



▲ Julia Wade | Menu

Photo courtesy Julia Wade Photography



▲ Lux Catering and Events | Fish & Chips Station sign

Photo courtesy Lux Catering and Events



▲ Lynne Reznick | Table number

Photo courtesy Lynne Reznick Photography



▲ Beyond the Box Catering | Bar menu

Photo courtesy Two Pair Photography



Lisa Dupar Catering | Food Station sign

Photo courtesy Matthew Land Studios

AS SEEN IN LAS VEGAS

AT "A DAY AT THE RACES" THE SALTED WATERMELON AND CUCUMBER SALAD WITH TAJÍN OFFERED AN ELEVATED SPIN ON ROADSIDE CHILI-DUSTED FRUIT.



At the Toyota National Dealer Meeting, a next-level guest experience pulled out all the flavor stops

By Amber Kispert

The Toyota National Dealer Meeting, held earlier this fall at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, was certainly a flavor-forward event for all those who attended, thanks in no small part to the team at the aptly named Flavor Forward Events, Pam Smith and Katie Ayoub.

"It's understanding the nuances of high impact flavor touches—finding that balance between familiar and bold, comfort zone and Adventureland," Ayoub said.

During the Toyota National Dealer Meeting, dealers and associates from across the country came together

for a spectacular two-day event that included brand and product immersion, live entertainment, as well as elegant food and beverage offerings.

"This year, Toyota was looking to level up the food and beverage experience and we were charged with overseeing the execution of memorable, singular flavor moments," Ayoub said. "Toyota does such a great job of telling their brand story at this event, through lighting, design, and sound elements, and really drawing attendees into the space and bringing that brand story to life. So, Pam and I wanted to weave food and beverage into that narrative and make it part of the theming. Rather than

All photos courtesy Kathryn Napier unless otherwise noted.



(LEFT) MINI LAMB PASTRAMI REUBEN SANDWICH WITH MELTED GOUDA AND FENNEL SLAW WITH CHILI RÉMOULADE.

Photo courtesy Aussie Select

provide the same catered-event fare throughout the entire event space, guests this year experienced unique menus in each of the ‘zones’ they visited.”

Flavor Forward Events, in partnership with SMZ Consulting—a food and beverage consultancy—worked in lockstep with the Mandalay Bay banquet teams and five guest chefs, putting forth Toyota’s vision of a next-level guest experience. Here’s a look at a few of the themes and how the food paired with the vehicles.

Campfires & Cookouts—Off the Beaten Path

In the zone where Toyota displayed many of its off-road vehicles, attendees encountered a food station titled, “Campfires & Cookouts—Off the Beaten Path,” where each dish was touched by fire, carrying forth the idea of fun adventure and off-road exploration and offering guests creative takes on campfire favorites.

“The Charred Corn and Smoked Gouda Creamy Cheese Grits, served with a Beef Jerky Crumble offers a great example,” Smith said.

Other offerings within this zone included: a Chile-Lime Cedar Plank Salmon with ember-roasted root vegetables and hearty herbs; and a Mini Bourbon Cheesecake with burnt marshmallow fluff topping and gingersnap crust.

A Day at the Races

When guests ventured into the Motorsports area, the flavor experiences at the food station, themed “A Day at the Races,” worked in harmony with all the other storytelling elements in that zone to add texture, color, aroma, and flavor. One whimsical dish was Mac and Aged Cheddar Cheese



A “**PERFORMANCE FLIGHT**” FEATURED A TRIO OF NONALCOHOLIC “BOOSTER SHOTS.” (L TO R): WELLNESS TONIC WITH PARSLEY, SPINACH, ROMAINE, KIWI, LEMON, GRANNY SMITH APPLE, KALE, CHLORELLA, ALGAE AND GINGER, WITH A GINGER CRYSTAL RIM; ELECTRO “LIT” BLUE MAJIK WITH COCONUT WATER, GRANNY SMITH APPLE, PINEAPPLE, ORANGE, LEMON, BLUE MAJIK AND SEA SALT, WITH A HIBISCUS CRYSTAL RIM; AND ELDERBERRY-ECHINACEA BOOSTER SHOT, WITH PROBIOTIC, LEMON, GINGER, PINEAPPLE, AND HOLY BASIL, WITH A BASIL CRYSTAL RIM.

(RIGHT) ON NIGHT TWO OF THE EVENT, CHEF JAMIE SIMPSON PUT ON AN IMMERSIVE FARM EXPERIENCE CALLED **"THE FARMER'S MARKET."** HIS ROVING WHEELBARROW OF PAPAS SALADAS INVOLVED A SERVER DRESSED AS A FARMER PUSHING THE WHEELBARROW AROUND, FILLED WITH COLOMBIAN-STYLE SALTED HEIRLOOM POTATOES. GUESTS USED A FORK TO EXTRACT A HOT POTATO, AND THE 'FARMER' DRIZZLED FIELD PEPPER EMULSION OVER TOP.

Bites, crusted with Creole-spiced crushed Goldfish crackers.

Other menu items included: Portobello Mushrooms with smoky barbecue sauce, pickled watermelon rind, cashew "cheese" and smoky porcini dust; and a Tajín-spiced Salted Watermelon and Cucumber Salad.

The Executive Highball Bar

This year, Toyota also featured an outdoor space as part of the event. It featured heritage trucks and a decked out cocktail lounge. To fit the vibe, Flavor Forward Events created a menu of handcrafted cocktails themed around each of the trucks, along with trend-forward passed small plates. The Executive Highball Bar, for example, matched a historic off-road truck with a drink called the Off-Road Desert Paloma, with tequila, mezcal, lime, guava, grapefruit soda, and a rim of black salt. The passed plates included an elevated take on a deli classic using lamb charcuterie: the Mini Lamb Pastrami Reuben Sandwich, with melted Gouda and fennel slaw, was served over a chili rémoulade, for dipping.

"The themed flavor stations were curated to breathe life and whimsy into each vehicle zone," Smith said.

Beyond the themed food zones, several of the food stations embraced the power of flair, spectacle and creativity. For example, the "flair stations," including torching desserts, tossing pasta in a parmesan wheel, and cooking on planchas to order, added drama and gave guests an immersive taste of the experience.

Additionally, one of the featured chefs, Jamie Simpson with The Culinary Vegetable Institute and Chef's Garden, brought a bit of whimsy to the event with his "Hive Mind" and "Roving Wheelbarrow."

(RIGHT) TO BRING IN A **"RADIANT OASIS"** THEME, THE BOTANICAL BAR WAS DESIGNED WITH FRESH BLOSSOMS, HANGING GREENERY AND FRAGRANT AROMATICS. FLAVOR FORWARD EVENTS WORKED WITH KIM HAASASRUD, OWNER OF MIXOLOGY FIRM LIQUID ARCHITECTURE, TO CREATE A FUN, COLORFUL SELECTION OF DRINKS, INCLUDING **THE SUMAC SWIZZLE (L)** WITH RUM, BLOOD ORANGE, AND SUMAC; AND **THE BRILLIANT BLUE**, WITH VODKA, GINGER, LYCHEE, LEMON, BLUE ALGAE, AND CLUB SODA.





(LEFT) TO CAPTURE THE SPIRIT OF OFF-ROAD ADVENTURE, SOME OF THE FOOD OFFERED WAS THEMED AROUND CAMPFIRES AND COOKOUTS. THESE **MINI BOURBON CHEESECAKES** FEATURED A BURNT MARSHMALLOW FLUFF TOPPING AND A GINGERSNAP CRUST. A CHOCOLATE COIN PAINTED "TOYOTA RED," HELPED DRIVE HOME BRAND MESSAGING IN A PLAYFUL, PLEASING WAY.



CHEF BRIAN HOWARD'S STATION WAS STRATEGICALLY PLACED IN AN AREA WHERE TOYOTA'S CUTTING-EDGE GAZOO RACING COMES TO LIFE. HIS FOOD MIRRORRED THAT SENSIBILITY, WITH OFFERINGS LIKE **SHIGOKU OYSTERS** ROASTED IN MISO-SPINACH BUTTER WITH BACON BREADCRUMBS.

IN THE ZONE

Some of the additional zones and menu offerings during the Toyota National Dealer Meeting included:

"Driving the Coastal Del Sol"

- Madrid Street "Cone," featuring jamon Serrano, aged Manchego, Spanish olive, and membrillo

"Old School Vegas Supper Club"

- French Onion Mac and Cheese, with Gruyère, white cheddar, oloroso sherry caramelized onions, topped with croutons

- Beef "Wellington," served as a mini party triangle with savory roasted mushrooms, seared filet medallions, black truffle-red wine glaze, chives

"Restorative & Peak Performance"

- Portobello Pasta Radiatore, with late summer tomatoes, super greens, portobello "bacon" and preserved lemon-garlic sauce



CHEF JJ JOHNSON'S FARE STRUCK THE PERFECT BALANCE BETWEEN COMFORT AND INTRIGUE AND FIT PERFECTLY INTO A SMALL-PLATE PRESENTATION. HIS **PIRI PIRI SEAFOOD BOWL** STARRED JUMBO SHRIMP AND LOBSTER TAIL IN PINEAPPLE BLACK FRIED RICE, CARAMELIZED BRUSSELS SPROUTS, CHARRED SWEET POTATOES, AND PIRI PIRI SAUCE.



THE DESIGN TEAM BUILT OUT AN EXQUISITE SPACE AT THE EVENT CALLED **TOKYO HOUSE**, WHICH SHOWCASED THE INCREDIBLE TEAM FROM **NOBU**. ON NIGHT TWO, THE MENU'S THEME WAS **"NOBU STREET FOOD,"** AND INCLUDED LOBSTER TACOS WITH AMAZU SOY SAUCE, RED ONION SALSA, AND AJI AMARILLO AIOLI.



FRENCH ONION MAC AND CHEESE WITH GRUYÈRE, WHITE CHEDDAR, OROSO SHERRY CARAMELIZED ONIONS AND CRISPY CROUTONS.



CHEF JAMIE SIMPSON AND HIS CREW OF "BEEKEEPERS," DELIVERED A "HIVE MIND" EXPERIENCE, SERVING FOUR MENU ITEMS OUT OF CUSTOM-MADE WOODEN HIVE BODIES. PICTURED HERE, THE CREW IS PREPARING **"CARROT ON A STICK,"** GLAZED WITH FERMENTED HONEY AND COATED IN PUFFED RICE AND THYME.

With the "Hive Mind," Simpson and his team dressed as beekeepers, and served menu items out of custom-made "hive bodies," wooden boxes that typically house bee colonies. The dishes included Whipped Honey with cherry blossom foam and bee pollen. The following night, Chef brought an immersive farm experience to the event. His "Farmer's Market" involved a server dressed as a farmer pushing a roving wheelbarrow around, filled with

Colombian-Style Salted Heirloom Potatoes. Guests used a fork to extract a hot potato, and the 'farmer' drizzled Field Pepper Emulsion over top.

"Food engages all of the senses, when it's done right," Smith said. "It forges emotional connections and creates visceral memories. For event planners, that's the goal, right? Making connections and being memorable." **CS**

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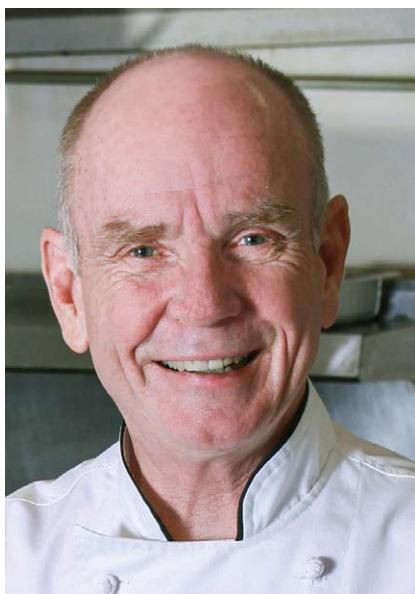


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By Lon Lane



Editor's note: I suffered from a severe case of envy in January of this year. I wanted to go on the journey Lon will tell you about, but a homeowner's nightmare caused me to reconsider. I followed it via Instagram and Facebook, just as I had done with an earlier trip the ICAEF took to Ireland. If you ever have the opportunity—go, go, go! Don't let a broken sewer line (my nightmare) keep you from it! —Kathleen



Photo courtesy Cade Nagy.

The Hidden Flavors of Mexico

The International Caterers Association Education Foundation (ICAEF) plans and produces **Culinary Learning Journeys** (CLJ) as an educational opportunity for caterers both nationally and internationally. These educational trips serve as a culinary and cultural occasion for caterers and raises money for scholarships awarded to deserving caterers to continue their culinary education.

The most recent journey, “Hidden Flavors of Mexico,” was held January 19–28, 2022, organized and expertly planned by Ingrid Nagy, the CLJ chairwoman in conjunction with and produced by Eric Alvarez and the team of Destination Management Services of Mexico.

We began our journey with the vibrancy of Mexico City then traveled Southeast to Oaxaca. We explored the cultural and culinary offerings of Chapultepec, Coyoacán, Puebla, Cholula, and more! From molé to tacos to fine Mexican dining, chocolate, Mexican wine, beer, and mezcal and tequila, our closely-knit group explored local food markets, bakeries, and shops, but also castles and Baroque churches embellished with gold.

Several of our accommodations were convents converted into lovely hotels. The breakfasts were terrific, and the lush landscaping, flowers, and fountains were a treat for the senses.

We visited indigenous ruins, pyramids, and a chocolate factory. We enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour of a Talavera pottery factory, a mezcal plantation tour, and a tasting. We explored Freida Kahlo's Blue House; learned how to make molé; and enjoyed an afternoon of taquerias and cantinas.

We devoted a day to a World Heritage Site of Xochimilco, where we boarded traditional Trajineras and motored to a small Island called Chinampa for a farm-to-table lunch. All created just for our group.

Our closing day was a recreation of the “Day of the Dead” celebration, all orchestrated and designed just for us. We learned the festival's history, built altars to honor those in our lives who have passed, and then celebrated into the night with traditional food and drink.

Lifelong friendships are forged during this travel time together. Our attendees came home with many culinary ideas, presentation styles, and recipes to incorporate into their daily business. The ICAEF Culinary Learning Journeys provide an atmosphere for peer-to-peer discussions relative to best business practices, sharing ideas and fellowship that lasts far beyond the closing night.

Visit our [website](#), click on our page, to learn more about the Foundation and check out our upcoming CLJ's.

We would love to travel with you!



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