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Show Issue 2021

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something sweet

This month's cover comes from Pinch Food Design out of New York, and we are thrilled to include the full recipe for this delectable dessert. Turn to page 58 for all the details.

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Voices carry

I want you to think about Antonio Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" (*Le quattro Stagioni*) and in particular *L'inverno* (Winter). If the music doesn't come to mind quickly, perhaps you might know it best from the opening of the culinary documentary series, *Chef's Table*.

It begins primarily with a single violin and then cascades into a rapturous orchestral movement. Look it up: you'll recognize the tune in a New York minute.

Vivaldi also wrote accompanying sonnets for each season, translated to English by Armand D'Angour. For winter, the end of the sonnet reads:

We tread the icy path slowly and cautiously, for fear of tripping and falling.

Then turn abruptly, slip, crash on the ground and, rising, hasten on across the ice lest it cracks up.

We feel the chill north winds course through the home despite the locked and bolted doors...

Does this read somewhat like running a business, having a life, during a pandemic?

I've co-opted these words because, like every good networking event, every good conference and tradeshow, every good sit at the bar with colleagues: we are at our best when we put our voices together in unison. Mine is just one voice and one experience, but collectively, this industry becomes a choir of deep bass tones harmonizing with the smoothest of altos and the highest of sopranos. And what a lovely song it is.

"This is the year that we need to come back, talk, get energized, and fix our businesses to expand and grow—and I'll tell you every step of the way why I didn't fail," said Michael Cerbelli at the recent CS + TSE Pre-show Pep Rally, adding, "If you join us in Miami, all of the leaders of the industry will be there."

It's those industry leaders on stage and in the hallways that make this event so important to attend: the company CEOs whose staffs are devoutly loyal and hardworking, the imaginative culinary geniuses who make meals unforgettable, the sales directors who consistently bring in the million-dollar events, the event planners whose overarching creativity is a joy to experience. Why are they still in business? How can you take what they are vocalizing and apply it to your own businesses?

We are moving into Vivaldi's "Spring" now, as the pandemic lifts. Hooray!

Springtime is upon us.

The birds celebrate her return with festive song, and murmuring streams are softly caressed by the breezes.

Thunderstorms, those heralds of Spring, roar, casting their dark mantle over heaven, then they die away to silence, and the birds take up their charming songs once more.

Join our beautiful industry gathering in July. I hope to see you there.

Kathleen

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The Foreseeable Future of Catering

Full service & limited service

There has been a massive buildup of asset-based household wealth in the U.S. This is in part because of the remarkable (and sometimes perplexing) runup in the stock market, and because of spending deferred during the pandemic. Most U.S. workers, particularly in white collar jobs, have remained employed during the pandemic. They have been banking a lot of their pay due to deferred spending on vacations, restaurant meals, sports and entertainment, and other typical activities.

The business and personal subsidies coming from the federal government have helped as well, though those have been more targeted toward the middle rather than the upper middle class.

How does this impact the full-service catering outlook?

We are confident that there is an enormous amount of pent-up demand for catered events. This will impact the various types of full-service catering within different time frames:

- **Life cycle catering events**, particularly weddings, quinceañeras and mitzvahs, are already recovering. Some of these have been rescheduled from the pandemic months, but much of this business is just part of the typical flow of life cycle events.
- **Social entertaining catering** is already generating incoming bookings and will start to recover substantially during this summer. This will include both full-service and drop & set catering.
- **Corporate marketing driven catering**, including VIP sponsorship events associated with sports and entertainment, are likely to start back up in the fall. Many sports and entertainment events were either held without spectators or cancelled altogether during the past year. When these events return, catered VIP hospitality will as well.
- **Small to medium local and regional meetings** with catering requirements are starting to show up on the calendar for later this year. These include SMERF (social,

military, educational, religious, and fraternal) events, as well as corporate events.

- **Fundraisers and galas** are already happening, sometimes as hybrid events, and sometimes as face-to-face events. It will probably be next year before we start to see fully reloaded gala schedules.
- **Convention and incentive travel-related catered events** will probably take some time to return to previous levels. But we are confident they will return eventually.

The sales numbers for the full-service catering industry have in the past tracked very closely with the overall economy. This has proven to be a very predictable trend through most of the economic downturns of the past 40 years. A quick economic recovery from the current downturn likely augurs well for the catering industry as a whole, though as noted above, some sectors will benefit sooner than others.

Limited-service catering

The recovery of limited-service catering, except for the social entertaining drop & set orders mentioned above, will primarily depend on offices, factories, stores, and warehouses starting to repopulate. Some of this return-to-work trend has started already, but how completely and how soon remains to be seen.

An article in the *Wall Street Journal* a few weeks ago discussed the return to office process in Australia, a country that is essentially in post-pandemic mode already. One interesting takeaway from the article was that food was being used to encourage the return to office movement. If you have office clients, make sure that they know that your services can help encourage key staff back to the office.

It may very well turn out that relatively junior staff doing rote work will be the last to return to working in person. Many senior corporate executives are anxious to have their teams back under the same roof, since the exchange of ideas among employees is one of the most important value-adding aspects of the successful modern corporation. The most forward-thinking companies use catered events to boost their employees' feelings of being appreciated.

YOLO/FOMO

In the corporate world, there are two different dynamics at play: YOLO and FOMO.

YOLO is an acronym for "You only live once." Many office grunts are considering whether in the post-pandemic era they want to go back to their former work lives, or instead travel the world, write that screenplay, or start selling on Etsy. If they are still working, they are considering whether they want to continue working at home to avoid the commute and spend more time with their families.

“WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THERE IS AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF PENT-UP DEMAND FOR CATERED EVENTS.”

Many of the most ambitious and valuable employees are already feeling fulfilled at work and may not be anxious to take more time away than they have in the last year.

Fear of missing out, or FOMO, will also impact catering. Many finance and tech personnel want to go back to the office, for fear of missing out...on promotions, on creative group thinking, on camaraderie. Same with some in the creative and educational pursuits. There is a strong case to be made that the remote workers are unlikely to either contribute to or benefit from creative interaction in the same way that those who work together in person do.

If YOLO rules, it may take some time for corporate catering to return, since the offices will remain sparsely populated. If FOMO dominates, then business may be back sooner.

Many of these trends will begin to reveal themselves over the next several months. Join us at Catersource + The Special Event in July, and we will revisit these predictions. 



See Carl Sacks at Catersource

Carl Sacks will teach “Event Strategies for Caterers in the Post-COVID Era” on Tuesday, July 20 at 9:30 a.m. You can also find the Certified Catering

Consultants ([certifiedcateringconsultants.com](https://www.certifiedcateringconsultants.com)) team in Room 240/241 at Catersource, offering free half hour appointments that can address catering-related challenges, identify high value opportunities, and help to improve your business and ROI.

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By Kathleen Stoehr

THE LOWDOWN ON HIGHBALLS



One might think that building the highball, a sparkler of a beverage high on effervescence and drinkability, is a simple process. A jangle of ice cubes, a splash of spirits, a sploosh of mixer, a squeeze of citrus—done. Simple. Ah, but I beg to add a few notes.

Like any beautifully mixed cocktail, flavors within can take on primary and secondary characteristics depending upon ratio. Botanicals within a gin or a whiskey can be elevated or diffused, and certainly “garbage” ice scooped from a traditional ice machine will impact beverage longevity far sooner than a stacked trio of solidly frozen cubes. The highball is quick to assemble, but only with the proper ingredients and ratios will it sing.

Developed in the late 1800s and first mentioned within a recipe book, *The Mixicologist* by Chris Lawlor in 1895, highballs were originally a spirit (namely whiskey) with seltzer topper, served over a single cube.

A hundred years later, guests are yelling, “Whiskey soda! G&T! Rum & Coke! Sea Breeze!” across the bar. With a well bottle from the speed rack, a shot from the soda gun, and a squeeze of citrus cut three hours prior, bar scene highballs have lost a lot of their nuanced beauty and credibility. Let’s break down what you need to have to create a perfectly executed highball.

GLASSWARE

The tall and narrow highball glass should accommodate anywhere from six to just over nine ounces of liquid. Any more than that and you are venturing into Collins territory, which is a solid nope in my book. Too much capacity in a glass will lead to an overabundance of mixer to top off the beverage, placing your ratios at peril.

ICE

Sit with me at a bar someday and you will note how opinionated I am about my ice. It is the most important ingredient in a cocktail. The wrong ice will ruin an otherwise top-notch tippie. “Garbage” ice, as mentioned earlier, looks as if it’s melting straight out of the scoop, has a high level of oxygen, are very small, and have indents or a hole in the middle of the cube. A cocktail shaken with this kind of ice leads to higher dilution; a cocktail (such as a highball) sitting in it is doomed. Use the clearest ice you can find (clear = less impurities...impurities also ruin the flavor), solidly constructed, and straight from the freezer.

GIN SLING

In the world of gin cocktails the gin sling stands out for its impressive diversity of ingredients, including cherry liqueur, Cointreau, Benedictine, and, of course, gin.

INGREDIENTS

1 oz G’Vine Gin
Floraison™
½ oz Cherry
Heering
4 oz pineapple juice
½ oz lime juice
¼ oz Cointreau
¼ oz Benedictine
1–2 T grenadine
1 dash Angostura
aromatic bitters

METHOD

Add all ingredients to a mixer, shake with ice, and pour in a highball. Garnish with ice and a cherry.



Photo & recipe courtesy
G’Vine Gin

GINGER KUMQUAT FIZZI/BOURBON MULE



This simple and refreshing beverage is an approachable, quick to construct, budget-friendly, and yet surprisingly complex given it has just three ingredients (not counting the ice, of course).

INGREDIENTS

2 oz Old Forester
– barrel infused
4 oz ginger beer
½ oz lime juice – fresh

METHOD

Add ice to highball, build your cocktail with lime juice, then spirit, and finally top with ginger beer. Garnish with fresh ginger and a kumquat.

Photo & recipe
courtesy Pinch Food
Design

SPIRIT

A chilled spirit is always the best for a highball, but beyond that, keep the unique properties of the spirit in mind, as some whiskeys (for example) may blossom with a ginger carbonate, while others are more suited for still water or seltzer.

MIXER OR CARBONATE

Always use the best water in your seltzer bottles, the most freshly squeezed of juices, the finest tonics and gingers. If you must use a soda gun, make sure the lines are flushed at least quarterly, the gun and holster cleaned daily.

GARNISH

Beyond the aesthetic that can elevate the highball to Instagram star, a garnish can accentuate, complement, or contrast with the cocktail flavors. Beware of overaccentuating, however. Using juniper berries to garnish a juniper forward gin such as a London Dry, or lime with your Tanqueray Rangpur makes little sense, *a la* gilding the lily. Garnishes can enhance flavor from oil expressed from the peel, mouthfeel from the crunch of a dried orange wheel, and visual appeal from the beauty of an edible flower. It can also delightfully confuse the nose with a contrasting scent.

To stir or not to stir? Most bartenders agree: when the highball is built properly, no stirring, or a whisper of a stir is all that is required if its mixer is a carbonate. Stirring only serves to tamp down the bubbles. As the bubbles rise and move in the glass they will naturally give the beverage a little assist in mixing, all on their own. **CS**



KOLMENA 

This cocktail, created by mixologist Gegam Kazarian, combines gin, white vermouth, and peach liqueur with lime, honey and syrup for a refreshing yet complex highball. Served with lots of ice, this is a perfect summer sipper that can be decorated with an edible flower or lime peel for an elegant garnish.

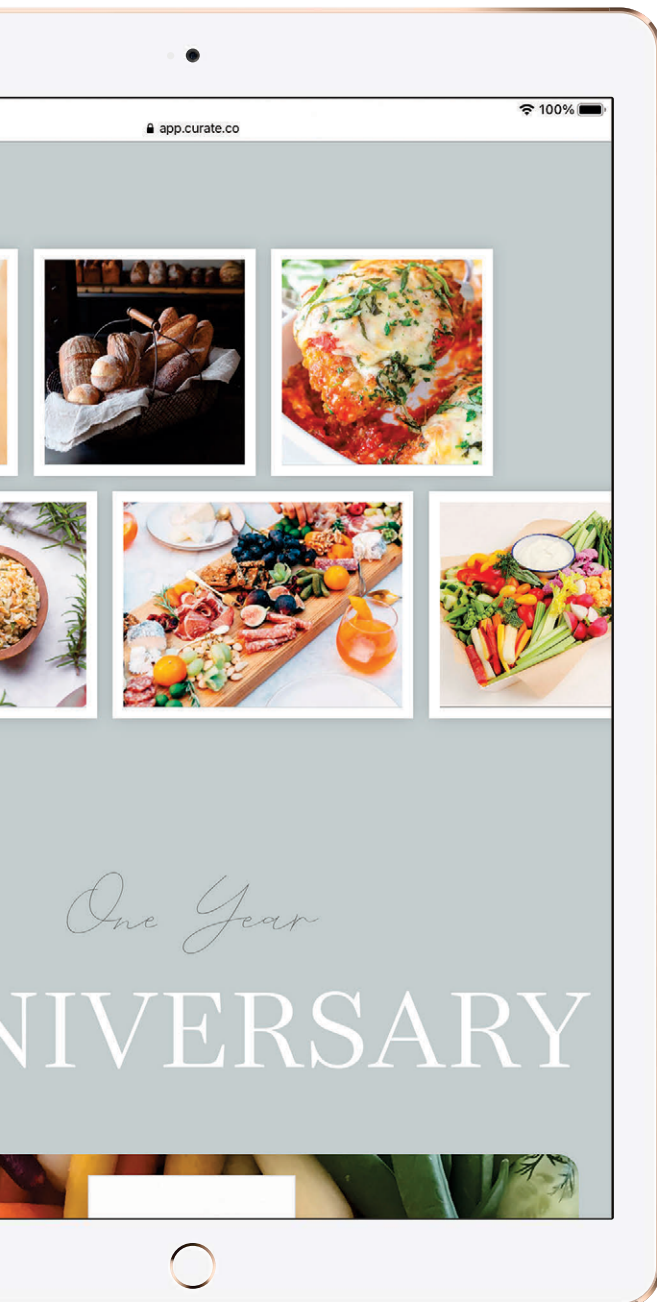
INGREDIENTS
 1½ oz G'Vine Gin Floraison™
 ¾ oz June® Wild Peach liqueur
 1 oz La Quintinye Vermouth Royal® Blanc

1 oz lime syrup
 1 T honey
 ½ T fresh ginger juice

METHOD
 Add all ingredients to a mixer, shake and pour in a highball with ice. Top with soda water and garnish with a ginger slice, a lime twist, and a seasonal flower if available.

Photo courtesy G'Vine Gin

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STEAL THIS



Fresh ideas to use or adapt at your next event.

Gorgeous GARNISHES

Plating a dish beautifully is akin to art. The colors, textures, placement, and flavors work together to create something truly masterful when set in front of a guest. Beyond eye-appeal, clever and beautiful garnishes often contribute to the overall flavor. Enjoy and be inspired by the creations from some very talented chefs, featured here.

—Amber Kispert

Pork liver mousse garnished with toasted sourdough bread, preserved cherries, Marcona almonds and fresh herbs
| Tony Fiasche, Tempesta Market, Chicago

Photo courtesy Kikkoman Sales USA, Inc.

► Honey mascarpone cheesecake
garnished with pizzelle cookies,
fennel pollen meringue, and
orange blossom honey ice cream
| **Honey Bee-stro Marketplace**
at Epcot International Flower &
Garden Festival

Photo courtesy National Honey Board



► Deconstructed gazpacho
garnished with tomato foam
and olive flat-bread stick |
Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth

Photo courtesy of the caterer



▼ Allium salad garnished with
crispy shallots and flowers |
Chef Jon Robbins, Bistro Barbes
in Denver

*Photo courtesy Jennifer Koskinen for the
National Onion Association*



▲ Burrata garnished with baby
Idaho potato chips and micro
greens | **Amy Brandwein,**
Centrolina Washington, D.C.

Photo courtesy Idaho Potato Commission



Farmers market salad garnished with puffed quinoa and nasturtium flowers | Chefs Tony Esnault and Benjamin Stephens

Photo courtesy California Milk Advisory Board



▲ Bouillabaisse bite with rouille toast, mussel, caviar | Pinch Food Design

Photo courtesy Pinch Food Design

▼ Champagne cake garnished with gold flakes | Chef Valerie Gordon

Photo courtesy Ketchum



▲ 18 Carot Gold Spring Cocktail garnished with dehydrated orange wheel, fresh fennel fronds and candied ginger | Chef Emily Ellyn

Photo courtesy of the chef



▲ “Tom” burrata with apple-sorrel juice, chive oil, shaved radish, tomatillo jam, bruschetta | **Pinch Food Design**
Photo courtesy Pinch Food Design



BOOTH 547





Catersource + The Special Event 2021 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, July 21

Opening General Session Keynote Speaker
Pablos Holman

Futurist • Inventor of the First 3D Food Printer • Innovator • Problem Solver





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NO S RE



Join us in Miami Beach for Catersource 2021

By Kathleen Stoehr

For nearly 30 years, Catersource has served as an educational resource and expansive network for the catering and special events industries. As the industry works 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 7/19, depart Friday morning 7/23

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 Hard Rock Miami, starting at 7:30 p.m. and ending at 10:30 p.m. End your week by joining us at the **Closing Night Party—An Industry Celebration**. In between, you won't want to miss a thing.

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



Register Now!

Revolutionary keynote & featured speakers

If there was ever a year to gain a fresh perspective and new ideas, it's 2021! A diverse line up of featured speakers include cake genius to the stars **Ron Ben-Israel**; Event Executive Director **Christina Matteucci**; D&I experts, **Dima Ghawi** and **Shakira Brown**; the ever-popular **Michael Cerbelli**, celebrating the 20th anniversary of his **The Hot List™**; designer of celebrations **David Tuter** (read full interview with David Tuter [here](#)); Retro rad chef **Emily Ellyn**; VP of Catering Sales for Wolfgang Puck, **Barbara Brass**; CEO/Creative Director, AOO Events, **David Merrell** and more!

On the opening day of the tradeshow floor, join futurist **Pablos Holman** for his opening general session keynote, but don't be late—the session will open with a love letter to the catering and events industries.

As the keynote concludes, join vendors on the tradeshow floor for a day of product exploration, or stay in your seats: the annual Diced competition begins at 10:30!



THIRTY MINUTES WITH PABLOS HOLMAN

Hacker. Inventor. Technology futurist with a unique ability to distill complex technology into practical tools. A member of the most prolific team of inventors in the U.S., Pablos Holman has over 70 patents.

Intimidated yet?

No? Okay, how about this:

A world-renowned expert in 3D printing, Artificial Intelligence, big data, robotics, automated manufacturing, and cryptocurrency, Holman has contributed to visions for the future of urban transportation, entertainment, education, energy,



manufacturing, health care, food delivery, sensor networks, payment systems and cloud computing.

Don't be intimidated by his accomplishments, however. What is great about his work/life aesthetic is that he breaks things, he questions processes, he even antagonizes people at times, all in order to make things better and more functional than they were originally.

He wants to inspire people to create solutions, to invent, and to problem solve—by looking at the world through the eyes of a hacker.

Finally, he is a fellow who smiles easily, laughs at corny attempts at jokes, and is enthusiastic about being in front of a live audience again.

"For my part," says Holman about his keynote at Catersource + The Special Event, "it is pretty obvious what my goal should be: to help people get past the fear and the panic [of the past 16 months] and get them into a mode of being optimistic and excited about rebuilding this industry. [It's time to] make it better than it was and hopefully make it resilient enough to handle these [types of crises] in the future, too."

Hacker with a heart

"I get it," he says. "I care a lot about this industry, and I know a thing or two about it, so hopefully I can connect with the audience and help them get [their businesses] back on track. I want

to be sensitive to what people have been going through."

Holman noted that, "I suffered the same thing everyone did. I want to meet people in various industries and learn from them. I want to meet other smart and interesting people and not getting to speak meant not getting to do that for a year. It really got to me."

Zoom speaking doesn't do it for him either, he says, because he can't feel a connection with the audience. "It's not rewarding for me," he says. Much of it has to do with the overall live show experience and that one crucial element that's best done in person: networking.

"What I realized is there are two points of value here. You have the content—what you're putting on stage, the educational piece...but I'm not sure people would come to the conference at all if they weren't getting the other part, which is being out in the lobby making friends, going to happy hour, your late-night opening event party, that stuff? That stuff is where the action is. You make those friends and those networking relationships."

See Pablos Holman LIVE

At the Opening General Session on the tradeshow floor, Holman will offer his unique ideas to the audience, and then answer a few questions as well. Be prepared to be inspired on **Wednesday morning, July 21 at 9:00 a.m.** The Opening General Session is included in the purchase of any pass, from All Access to tradeshow only.

Schedule at a Glance

MONDAY

Connect Live event at the Hard Rock Miami
7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

TUESDAY

Conference education
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Opening Night Party at The Fillmore Miami Beach
7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Opening General Session
9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Tradeshow floor hours
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Conference education
11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Event Experience at Jungle Island
6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

SEARCH's Annual Signature Event at Paradise Plaza
9:30 p.m. to Midnight

THURSDAY

Michael Cerbelli's: The Hot List™
8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Tradeshow floor hours
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Conference education
10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Leadership Lunch at the W Hotel
11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

David Tutera's Be BOLD closing session
3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Closing Night Party—An Industry Celebration
7:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.
Ballroom C & B



Top notch culinary

If you hope to expand your culinary operations in 2021 and beyond, there is a terrific line up of chef-forward classes available on the Culinary Experience stage and Culinary Main stage at Catersource. 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.

Additionally, in conjunction with the American Culinary Federation, 30 classes have been approved as eligible for CEH credits. Go online to [schedule.catersource.com](https://www.catersource.com) and click on the "Associations & Accreditations" box to see the CEH-approved sessions. Gain access to trending recipes, learn menu pricing and cost savings, get insight into building COVID-safe buffets, learn about the science of chocolate & cakes, and discover creative plating ideas—these are just a few of the culinary classes you will experience.



TOP: LAST YEAR, MATT & TED LEE TEAMED UP WITH JUAN & JORGE SOTO TO QUICKLY PLATE RACK OF LAMB DURING HOT BOX 101. PHOTO COURTESY WASIO PHOTOGRAPHY

CHEF ALEXI MANDOLINI DEMONSTRATED HOW TO MAKE MINI SHAKSHUKA WITH BRAISED LAMB LAST YEAR. PHOTO COURTESY WASIO PHOTOGRAPHY

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 248 to sign up for a free consultation during show hours Tuesday through Thursday.

is fun and organic; these sessions are often identified as some of the most popular, year after year.

▲BY WALKING THE TRADESHOW FLOOR, ATTENDEES CAN SEE THE LATEST PRODUCTS RANGING FROM CULINARY TO LINEN TO TABLEWARE. PHOTO COURTESY WASIO PHOTOGRAPHY

Candid conversations

Always a favorite, Candid Conversation sessions are free-wheeling “unsessions”—no set agenda or Powerpoint presentations; just an industry professional at the front of the room, ready to answer your questions about topics they excel at. Bring culinary questions to Food Network stars **Ron Ben-Israel** and **Emily Ellyn**; ask **David Tutera** the burning design question you’ve always wanted answered; **Meryl Snow** and **Alan Berg** will be available to talk marketing and sales, and more. Your questions, their answers. The learning

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 2021 and beyond. Additionally, a culinary competition and the excitement of the Opening General Session with keynote **Pablos Holman**, Michael Cerbelli’s: The Hot List™ on Thursday morning, and Closing Session with keynote **David Tutera**.



Industry accolades: award recipients

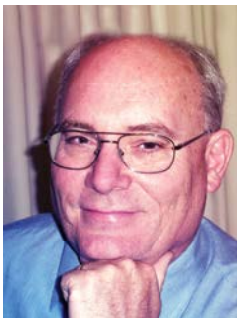
Each year, we honor industry leaders who we, at Catersource + The Special Event, feel have made a significant and positive impact on our industries. Join us in celebrating remarkable individuals at our annual **Leadership Lunch on Thursday, July 22.**

First—start your experience in gratitude by enjoying the music of four-time Grammy award winner **Tomasito Cruz**



(above, right), who will blend his international flair of ChaChaCha, Son, Rumba, Afro, Timba, Guaracha, Pilon and Bolero to give this event a burst of lively Cuban flavor.

Next, learn leadership skills from keynote **Christina Matteucci** (above, left), Executive Director at David Beahm Experiences. Enjoy a beautiful lunch with your colleagues and peers, and finally, celebrate with recipients **Roy Porter** (Michael Roman Lifetime Achievement award); **Robin Selden** (Carbotti award) and **Connie Riley** (Special Events Gala Lifetime Achievement award), as well as the **surprise award recipient of the Steve Kemble award.**



(LEFT) **ROY PORTER**,
(ABOVE) **ROBIN SELDEN** AND (LOWER LEFT) **CONNIE RILEY**



2020 MICHAEL ROMAN LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT LON LANE. PHOTO COURTESY WASIO PHOTOGRAPHY





THE MIAMI WILL SERVE
VENUE FOR THIS YEAR'S
NIGHT PARTY. PHOTO
SY AVABLU / RYAN FORBES

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 JULY 19

CHAIR: Tracy Davis-Fox,
Party Artistry

On Monday evening, head to the Hard Rock Café Miami for an exciting opener to the week. As we all come together after more than a year apart, join us in reconnecting with old acquaintances and find new friends as we all prepare to be reinvigorated for the future.

TUESDAY JULY 20

CHAIRS: Jeniffer Bello, JB Experiences; Shalisa James, Entertainment Central Productions; Cari Petroselli, Otherwise Production Group

The Opening Night Party at the Fillmore Miami Beach (shown above), titled Euphoria, will offer an immersion into the senses of sight and sound. This evening will be highlighted by high energy, fresh entertainment, and an ambiance where

guests are surrounded by rich lighting, lush foliage, and colorful bursts of floral accents. Taste buds will intensify via succulent culinary eats accompanied by signature cocktails that will be sure to push the bounds of flavor.

WEDNESDAY JULY 21

CHAIRS: Oniki Hardtman, Oh! Niki Occasions; Christi Carey, Your Destination Connect

The Event Experience places a keen eye on food and beverage trends in the lush setting at Jungle Island in Miami. Transportation will be provided to and from the event from the Miami Beach Convention Center, as well as the Loews hotel property. Look for an F&B showcase that will inspire your upcoming menus!

THURSDAY JULY 22

CHAIR: Chad Everett, Events by Galaxy

James Keller said, "...a candle loses nothing by lighting another candle," and that is the inspiration for a gathering like no other. The Closing Night Party, held in Ballrooms B & C at the Miami Beach Convention Center will certainly wow you with its transformation from conference rooms to over-the-top industry celebration! Join us as we reignite our precious industry, darkened for too long. Celebrate with colleagues amidst an entertainment-filled experience as we wrap up a great week for our industry and embark on our industry rebuild. The time has come to celebrate the hope, love, and light that we instill with steadfast dedication into every event we create.



NETWORKING IS THE KEY TO ANY SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE. LAST YEAR'S CATERSOURCE CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW'S OPENING GENERAL SESSION EVEN FOCUSED ON IT. PHOTOS COURTESY WASIO PHOTOGRAPHY



FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES CAN GATHER TOGETHER DURING THE OPENING NIGHT PARTY. PHOTO COURTESY WASIO PHOTOGRAPHY

Networking opportunities

Beyond the evening events, pass time has been increased between sessions to allow more time to say hello and move between tradeshow floor and conference rooms. Most sessions allow 30 minutes pass time. There is a one-hour break for lunch in the conference area each day as well.

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



30 CEH (Continuing Education Hours) credits are American Culinary Federation-approved



CPCE (Certified Professional in Catering & Events) Fast Track classes will be available at the conference



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

Associations & groups

Speaking of which, a great number of 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:

- **American Culinary Federation (ACF)**
- **Association for Wedding Professionals International (AFWPI)**
- **Black in Events**
- **Certified Catering Consultants (CCC)**
- **International Caterers Association (ICA)**
- **International Caterers Association Educational Foundation (ICAEF)**
- **Leading Caterers of America (LCA)**
- **Live Events Coalition (LEC)**
- **National Association for Catering and Events (NACE)**
- **SEARCH Foundation**
- **Tourism Diversity Matters**
- **Wedding International Professionals Association (WIPA)**



Michael Cerbelli's: The Hot List™ celebrates 20 years

Like The Hot List™ that Michael Cerbelli is known for—it is, and he is—best experienced LIVE.

You will get him live at Catersource + The Special Event when his The Hot List returns for its 20th anniversary on Thursday morning, July 22. Says Cerbelli, “In a Google society where you can type something in and find it, The Hot List takes it one step further. You don’t have to go searching for it. I’m sharing the wealth.”

It all started with frustration: unable to get the name of a supplier from a fellow designer, he decided that he’d “open up my little black book of

ideas” and offer the transparency of idea-sharing that he craved.

Over the years, he has featured emerging technology, he has put himself in peril (even knives thrown at him), has had his portrait created in various mediums (chocolate, crayons, Rubik’s Cubes, etc.), and also proposed marriage onstage.

While he mentions that his 20th anniversary celebration may look a bit different than prior years, he is “building a show that makes sense for the audience.”

It has been a tough year, says Cerbelli, and “I want to create a show that really makes a ‘wow’ but also has the right things [for the time] up there.”

You won’t want to miss this uplifting industry gathering. “You will have a great show, I promise!”

For a full interview with Michael Cerbelli, head to *Special Events* magazine’s 2021 show issue.

[Click here.](#)



SHOW STOPPERS



Airstar NEO Sparks Imagination

Inspired by the classic appeal of neon signs, Airstar's NEO continues the spirit of a timeless aesthetic. These RGBW LED light tubes are available in lengths of 8.2 and 16.4 feet. Combine multiple units together to make structure or display them separately to illuminate an area with radiant visual lines.

AIRSTAR AMERICA
(800) 217-9001
marketing@airstar-light.us
www.airstarevents.com
<https://www.facebook.com/airstaramerica>
<https://twitter.com/airstaramerica>

Booth 1328



Leading Caterers of America

Leading Caterers of America (LCA) is a consortium of top caterers throughout the US and Canada. The LCA offers a unique and innovative solution for users of catering services, whether for an individual celebration in a single location, or an entire series of events throughout North America. (Photo courtesy Elegant Affairs)

LEADING CATERERS OF AMERICA (LCA)
973.256.7900
www.leadingcaterersamerica.com
carlsacks@leadingcaterersamerica.com
FB: /LeadingCaterersOfAmerica



Booth 1237



International Caterers Association

For motivated caterers, International Caterers Association is a resource that provides education, encourages peer to peer relationships and inspires creativity while embracing all segments of the catering industry. Visit with ICA members in their booth on the Catersource tradeshow floor and join their ranks! (Photo courtesy Emperyan Events & Catering)

INTERNATIONAL CATERERS ASSOCIATION (ICA)
410.931.8100
info@internationalcaterers.org
www.internationalcaterers.org



Booth 621



National Association for Catering & Events

The National Association for Catering and Events (NACE) is the first non-profit national organization for caterers, event planners and event professionals that provides education, certification and a network of resources for members in all segments of the hospitality industry.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CATERING & EVENTS (NACE)
410.290.5410
info@nace.net
www.nace.net



No Booth

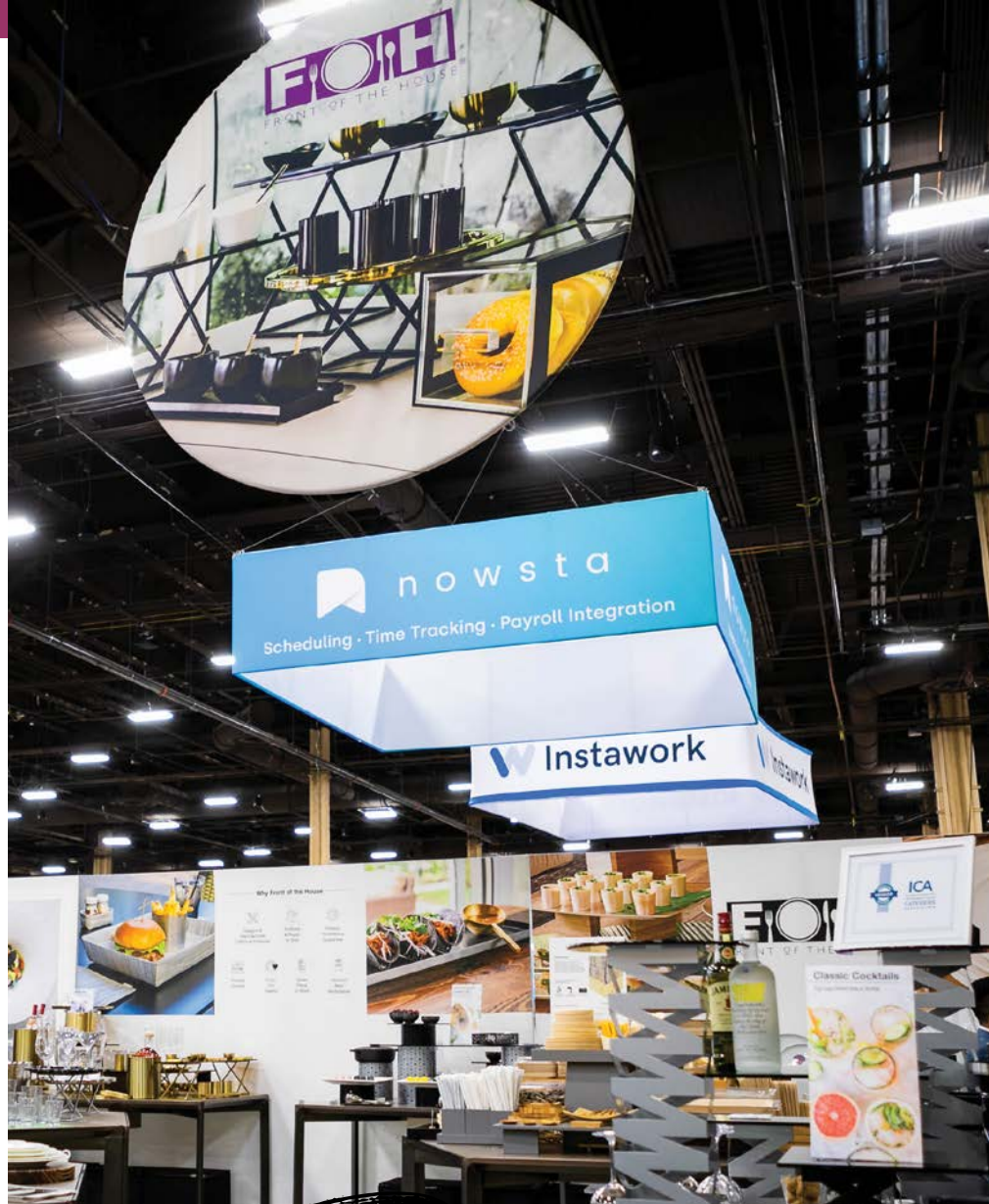


Show Floor



We're back! Make sure to attend the Catersource Tradeshow on Wednesday and Thursday, July 21 and 22, so you don't miss a second of the action. On the Tradeshow floor you will see a comprehensive collection of products and services for the catering and events industry, including new solutions that address health and safety. Meet with your vendors face-to-face, discover new suppliers who want to do business with you, and of course, you can't forget the education that will be taking place, including cooking demonstrations, the Diced competition, the Opening General Session with Pablos Holman, and the closing keynote featuring David Tuter.

In the following pages, you will find some of the products



Sneak Peak

and services to keep your business running smooth, while staying on top of everything that is new and exciting! The Tradeshow floor will be chockfull of everything you'll need to surprise and delight the guests at your events.

Attend this premier industry buying, learning, and browsing event and you will be able to check out these goods in person, take home samples, make purchases on the Tradeshow floor, all while networking and learning.

The Tradeshow floor is the hub of Catersource Conference & Tradeshow because it brings everyone together: vendors, planners, chefs, peers, and colleagues!

Miami here we come!

The Catersource Tradeshow floor will be open:

**Wednesday, July 21
from 10:00 a.m. to
5:00 p.m.**

**Thursday, July 22
from 10:00 a.m. to
5:00 p.m.**

**You can see a full lineup
of the 2021 exhibitors by
[VISITING HERE](#)**



A safe dining experience with US Foods

As business recovers and in-person events make a resurgence in the post-COVID-19 world, diners want to feel secure and safe whether they're eating on-premise or taking it to go. This makes first-rate takeout packaging essential, so that dishes retain their quality, integrity, and temperature, while keeping diners safe. Make sure you have the quality containers and tamper-proof seals you need to fulfill orders while instilling confidence in your consumers.

That's a tall order, but you're not in this alone. Ready with expert guidance, industry-leading business tools, and the right products for every application, your partners at US Foods® are here to help you make it. Visit our booth to chat with one of our industry experts and find the solutions to the challenges you're facing today.

US Foods
Booth 847
usfoods.com
847.720.8000
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t @USFoods



◀ **CLEAR PACKAGING CAN MAKE FOOD SELECTION EASY AND FAST IN MOST SITUATIONS.**

PHOTO © 2020 US FOODS

TAMPER-EVIDENT BREAKERS ARE A GREAT MEANS TO INSTILL CONSUMER CONFIDENCE.

PHOTO © 2020 US FOODS



"SEALED FOR YOUR SAFETY" MESSAGES MEANS CUSTOMERS WILL FEEL MORE SECURE IN THEIR PURCHASES.

PHOTO © 2020 US FOODS

Learn why top caterers are saving time & money by switching to Nowsta

Managing staff is one of the biggest challenges caterers face. Scheduling staff across hundreds of events using email, spreadsheets, or legacy software is a time-consuming headache. And, tracking staff hours using paper timesheets is rife with errors.

That's why Nowsta was built. Nowsta is an all-in-one staff management platform that integrates scheduling, time & attendance, analytics, and payroll integration.

Nowsta is the only platform that lets caterers schedule event staff and hourly staff on a single platform. Tags and filters help you find the best person for each shift. Staff get work requests via the Nowsta mobile app and can accept instantly—the median employee response time is just 38 minutes. And, automatic overtime warnings will cut your labor costs. What's more, Nowsta syncs with sales platforms like Caterease or Total Party Planner, eliminating duplicate entry.



You can say goodbye to paper timesheets with Nowsta's automated time and attendance options. Let your staff check themselves in using Nowsta's GPS self check-in feature, or let your captains check-in the staff working under them. And for your in-house staff, put Nowsta on a tablet, stick it on a wall, and you have a timeclock with photo verification to prevent buddy punching.

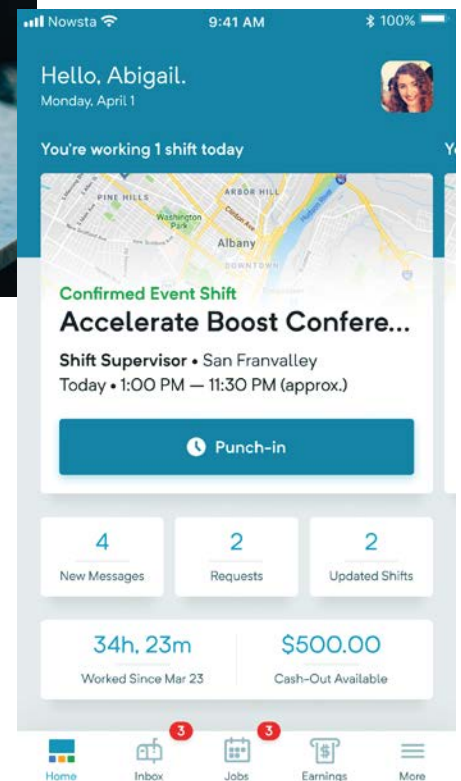
When it comes time to run payroll, Nowsta automatically flags any time-punches when an employee is early or late. Nowsta lets you export time and attendance data directly to your payroll provider, so you don't have to enter it by hand. Nowsta integrates with just about every

payroll provider. Running payroll takes just a few clicks, saving you hours in the process.

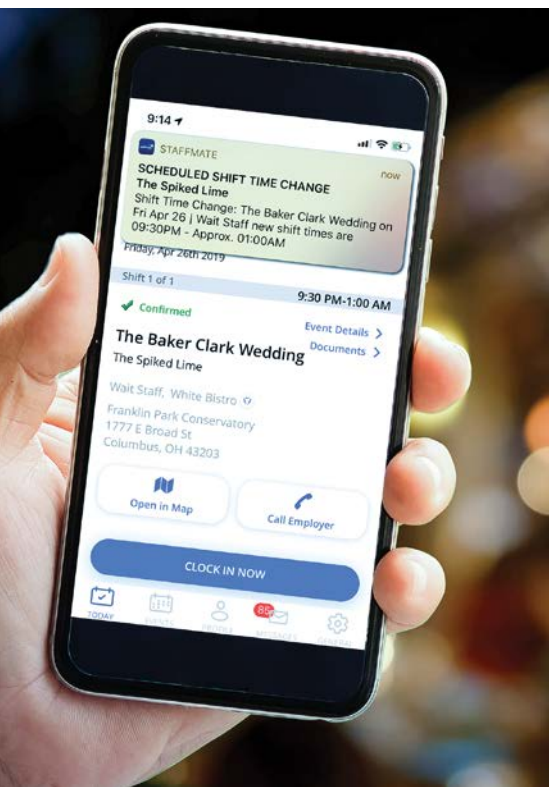
Nowsta creates a better work experience for everybody in catering: business owners, managers, and staff alike! Visit us at Catersource to learn how we can save your team hundreds of man hours per year, give you tighter control of your labor budget, and help you retain your best staff.

Catersource attendees who sign up for Nowsta within one week of the conference can receive their first month free by using code Catersource2021!

catersource + **THE SPECIAL EVENT**
2021 PLATINUM SPONSOR



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Staffmate 2021: envision an ecosystem

In software, an ecosystem is a solution which positively impacts every part of an organization. Software ecosystems bind company resources together and make disparate software solutions highly connected, more meaningful, and more robust. Software ecosystems feed from, and to, every other operational unit to ensure the most efficient flow of communication and data. Continuing its legacy of shaping the future of our industry, 2021's

StaffMate Online
Booth 813
staffmate.com
888.782.3341
f /StaffmateOnline
@StaffmateOnline

version of StaffMate boasts powerful new tools and features designed to allow your entire operation to flow and perform at optimal efficiency.

Single time & attendance solution

At Catersource, interact with the most flexible time & attendance solutions available: GPS Mobile Employee Time Clocks, Assigned Timekeeper Tools, Stand-Alone Time Stations for Kitchen, Warehouse, Office & Contract Locations and the new OSM To Go, an entire remote event management system.

No matter how you choose to have StaffMate capture your worker time data, watch as it immediately and seamlessly flows from multiple capture sources into the industry's most powerful and intuitive payroll prep and export tools.

Automated overtime notifications, an innovative gratuity distribution auto-bot, custom premium pay items, automatic OT calculations and filters for W2 workers, contractors, agencies and gig workers all combine to provide precision labor and cost control.

OSM To Go: remote event management

Another industry debut at Catersource is StaffMate's OSM To Go. This event-day tool for On Site Managers provides every bit of information OSMs need to execute the perfect event, right on their own mobile phones or tablets: Complete Time Clock Management, BEOs, Floor Diagrams, Client Details, Attire Distribution, Logistics, Safety & Security, Task Assignments, and custom Post-

Event Action Reports which flow immediately to upper management.

Connecting the ecosystem

Import events from catering management software, drop in staff from your onboarding solution, drag and drop BEOs, invoices, site maps and floor diagrams. Pinpoint exact event sites with our movable map markers. Explore integrations with Waze, Uber, Lyft and Google to experience impressive ride hailing, ride sharing and navigation options. Automatically source and schedule agency and gig workers.

See and demo new features that couldn't be listed here and grab show-only pricing at Staffmate's sponsorship of the Catersource Opening General Session or by visiting Booth 813. See for yourself how StaffMate 2021 is designed to connect your entire ecosystem, from sales to staffing, kitchen to on-site prep, warehouse to set up, OSM to owner.





FOH brings the WOW

Bring the WOW factor to your buffet experience and create powerful and safe presentations with versatile trend-setting buffet collections from Front of the House® featured at this year's Catersource Conference & Tradeshow.

B3 Buffet Building Blocks® by FOH® delivers all the essential elements and a wide array of modular options from risers to boards, from trays and platters, and coordinated accessories from Front of the House® including porcelain plates, bowls, and platters to create endless display options. Find your ideal buffet set-up to match any theme and mix & match across collections for unique ways to use our multifunctional pieces. All FOH buffet items are designed for easy storage by nesting and/or being collapsible and stackable and innovatively versatile to take you from morning to night.

To further maximize your investment, add a personalized experience by incorporating your logo, image, or artwork for a unique and personalized experience.

Provide endless possibilities that deliver on performance and price, are in-stock, and ready-to-ship!

Receive 10% OFF your next order using CODE: CS21

**Front of the House, Inc.
Booth 512**

frontofthehouse.com
305.757.7940

[f](#) /FOHinc

[t](#) @FOHinc

Mobile mixology & more

Forbes contemporary Foss Mixology Cart is sure to make a statement.

The Elite Foss Mixology Cart features white or black polyethylene work surface, wood veneer finish, brushed Stainless Steel tube frame, and two sliding speed rails, drink presentation platform, gallery rails on middle and base shelves, two customizable ice compartments, Stainless Steel drip tray, built-in condiment station, glass rinser, flip-out amenity drawer, adjustable glass dividers on center shelf, built-in Mixology tool storage, and 4" wheels.

Forbes will also be showcasing: Century rolling display, Rustica rolling display and family of products, new luxury woven material skins for its Mystique bar, and portable catering & cocktail tables. In addition, mobile mixology cart grab & go stations, Lightning charging tables, Revolution cafe tables, mobile martini bar, deluxe back bar, Multilok (indoor/outdoor) dance floor, and the Rustica Family of products (i.e., mobile bar, podium, wall partition).



**Forbes Industries
Booth 721**

forbesindustries.com
800.832.5427

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[t](#) @forbesindustrie

*
By Amber Kispert

We'll Toast to Th

Campus Executive Chef Joseph Pina from Bridgewater State University talks toast & sandwiches

Toasts and sandwiches quickly became a popular food trend as we continued to navigate the pandemic. Maybe it was because everyone decided to try baking their own bread or—and this is more likely—they were craving the comfort and nostalgia that sandwiches evoke. But don't be fooled, today's toasts and sandwiches are a far cry from the traditional ham & cheese, or peanut butter & jelly.

"Everyone has their own different variations on it, so it's not your typical peanut butter & jelly anymore," said Chef Joseph Pina, the Campus Executive Chef for Bridgewater State University, which is affiliated with Sodexo. "You can put so many fresh ingredients on top, but it's really all about the bread and having the best bread possible."

Pina will demonstrate why these popular handhelds are able to fulfill appetites of all ranges and all meal periods during his Catersource Conference & Tradeshow education session, "Toasts, Sandwiches & Sliders: The Perfect Serve." Along with colleague Christine Hubbard (also Sodexo), Pina will discuss the growing popularity of grab-and-go, and how



CHEF
JOSEPH
PINA



eat!

sandwiches and toasts can easily migrate into catered passed apps, sandwich “flights” and small plates.

“We’re really looking at shareable pieces at this point in time because it allows you to try everything on the menu,” Pina said. “People have become foodies, so they can now understand cuisine and culture.”

A combination of experience & flavors

Pina has always been a fan of varied flavor combinations, so it’s no surprise that toasts and sandwiches are right up his alley given they offer unlimited possibilities.

AVOCADO MULTI- GRAIN TOAST



CHEF JOSEPH PINA'S MULTI GRAIN AVOCADO TOAST.

Photo courtesy of the chef

YIELD: 4

INGREDIENTS

4 ea. avocado – peeled and seeded
3 T cilantro, chopped
1 ea. lime – juiced
¾ tsp kosher salt
4 slices multi-grain bread
½ tsp cracked black pepper
1 tsp red pepper flakes
1 tsp sea salt
2 T avocado oil
Garnish: rainbow micro greens

METHOD

1. Peel and mash the avocado; in a small bowl, combine avocado with cilantro, lime and kosher salt to taste.
2. Toast multi-grain bread until golden brown.
3. Spread avocado mixture on each slice of toasted bread, end to end.
4. Sprinkle on the cracked black pepper, red pepper flakes, and sea salt.
5. Drizzle avocado oil for flavor.
6. Garnish with rainbow micro greens.

BRIOCHE TOAST WITH WALNUT CREAM CHEESE

YIELD: 4

INGREDIENTS

3 oz walnuts
8 oz. cream cheese
4 slices brioche bread
8 ea. fig – fresh
Drizzle of maple syrup
1 sprig thyme – fresh, leaves removed

METHOD

1. Chop walnuts with a knife or

by putting into a bag and beat
with a mallet.

2. Add walnuts and cream to a
bowl and mix.

3. Take figs and slice them; about
3 to 4 slices per fig. Put to the side.

4. Toast the brioche bread. Once
toasted, spread cream cheese filling
on top of the toast.

5. Top with sliced figs and layer in the
fresh thyme.

6. Drizzle the toast with pure
maple syrup.



CHEF JOSEPH PINA'S BRIOCHE TOAST WITH WALNUT
CREAM CHEESE *Photo courtesy of the chef*

“I love to see what I can pair to really complement
one another, whether it’s textures or maybe it’s
something sweet with some heat.”



"I love to see what I can pair to really complement one another," he said, "whether it's textures or maybe it's something sweet with some heat."

Pina has been the Campus Executive Chef at Bridgewater State University for two years, while working for Sodexo nearly 20 years in all. Prior to his arrival at Bridgewater State, Pina served as an Executive Culinary & Marketing Chef in Sodexo Corporate Services and Marriott Hotels.

Chef Pina works diligently on outfitting his menus with the latest culinary trends, training his team with current service techniques, and prioritizing quality and freshness in his cuisine. Never satisfied with the

status quo, he works with the goal of inspiring his guests to embark on a new and authentic cuisine adventure. He believes that we must teach both our culinary leaders and our customers the art of cuisine and how to "carry the torch" to promote true authenticity of and respect toward diverse global culinary cultures.

"I love the ability to make guests really think about what they're eating," he said.

In order to whet your appetite for Pina's upcoming Catersource session, here is a little taste of what to expect when he starts talking toasts and sandwiches. *Bon Appetit!* 



CHEF JOSEPH
PINA'S VEGAN
TEXAS TOAST WITH
SUN BUTTER.
*Photo courtesy of
the chef*

VEGAN TEXAS TOAST WITH SUN BUTTER

YIELD: 4

INGREDIENTS

4 slices Texas toast
¾ cup sunflower seed butter
2 ea. banana, sliced
4 oz vegan chocolate chips
Drizzle of agave nectar

METHOD

1. Take the Texas Toast loaf and cut a ¾" slice. Place in toaster to desired color.
2. Once done, spread sunflower seed butter on top; ensure full coverage to the ends of the slice.
3. Arrange the sliced bananas on top; layering them on top of one another.
4. Sprinkle the vegan chocolate chips on top of the bananas.
5. Drizzle with agave nectar generously as it gives the bananas a nice shine.

See Chef Pina at Catersource!



Learn from **Chef Joseph Pina** at Catersource during his culinary demonstration, **"Toasts,**

Sandwiches & Sliders: The Perfect Serve."

Pina and co-presenter Christine Hubbard will demonstrate how to incorporate trend-forward toasts, sandwiches, and sliders into your menu offerings. From breakfast beginnings to late night nosh, you will leave with ideas to delight your guests.

Go to conference.catersource.com to get your pass today.

catersource®
JULY 19-22, 2021 | MIAMI BEACH

Meet Roy Porter, *Real*

MANY DESCRIBE **ROY PORTER** AS A TEACHER, BUT HE CONSIDERS HIMSELF A LIFELONG LEARNER. "IT'S JUST MY NATURE TO WANT TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE—I'M A VACUUM FOR IT—AND I LIKE TO SHARE WHAT I'VE LEARNED." *Photos courtesy Catersource*

Catering's Renaissance Man

This year's Michael Roman Lifetime Achievement Award winner lives to learn, teach, and bring the industry to an increasingly professional and unified level.

He has sold everything from cosmetics to heavy industrial equipment. He has run a direct marketing lead agency. Then, he brought all he has learned in these disparate fields to become a consummate catering professional in charge of prestigious events such as the Academy and Emmy Awards, more than 3,500 weddings, and innumerable other high-profile mega-events.

But Roy Porter is so much more than the sum of his experience. He is an inveterate, insatiable learner who scoops up knowledge of everything from lean manufacturing to etiquette history and generously shares it with all who want to improve their catering chops. A regular contributor to *Catersource* magazine, *Art of Catering* Food, and *Catersource*

Conference & Tradeshow, he has earned many unofficial titles, from the Renaissance Man, the Professor, and the Catering Guru, to the Storyteller and the Catering MacGyver.

Most of all, he is, as his friend and colleague Carl Clemetson, Senior Event Producer with Hometown Elegance Catering and Production, says, “the quiet, clear, consistent voice of reason that cuts through all the drama of the catering business.”

In short, he follows in the footsteps of Michael Roman, who founded *Catersource* to do just that. There is no one more fitting to be recognized as this year's Michael Roman Lifetime Achievement Award winner, say all who know him.

Renaissance Man

While he learned something about feeding a crowd by growing up in a family of five, his path first meandered in some vastly different directions, including sales



YOU WILL OFTEN FIND ROY PORTER BACK OF HOUSE, SUCH AS HERE, AT ART OF CATERING FOOD. Photo courtesy *Catersource*



ROY PORTER IS A FAMILIAR FACE BEHIND THE BAR AT SOME OF THE INDUSTRY'S MOST HIGH-PROFILE EVENTS, SUCH AS THE ACADEMY AND EMMY AWARDS. *Photo courtesy Roy Porter*

and marketing. He was running a direct lead-generation agency when the economy hit the skids in 2007 and it became apparent it was time to move on.

While his background in food service (while in college) had already put him in charge of arranging the agency's dinners, as well as hiring caterers for press and investor events, he had not really thought much about going into catering as a business...until a seed was planted. A caterer he had worked with said, "If you need a job, come on over and we'll put you to work." He went ahead and applied for the job, thinking that the flexible hours would allow him to keep his hand in the lead-generation industry.

"It just kind of grew from there," he says. After about a year with that first company, he signed up with several other caterers and staffing agencies in the Southern California area, where he lived, "so I could get work to keep my house and keep my

wife and daughter fed. I found the work—and the problem-solving—really fulfilling."

"Roy leverages everything he learned in all the different industries he has worked with to provide an outsider perspective that may not seem to make sense when you first hear it," says Clemetson. "But he can take lessons from Toyota's manufacturing model, the postal service, direct marketing—all sorts of non-catering organizations, and apply them to what you do in catering. It helps get you out of the weeds of details we tend to get caught up in. He leads you to the answers, but lets you discover them for yourself, in a very humble way."

Professor

OF HIS ROLE as the industry's Professor, Porter says:

"Knowledge is power. It enables people to get rid of barriers and obstacles. It provides avenues to greater income

opportunities, and it is fun to be creative and solve problems. It's just my nature to want to continually improve—I'm a vacuum for it—and I like to share what I've learned."

When Porter first got into catering, "it was a bit frustrating because there wasn't much training material for caterers," he said. "I used to call Mike Roman and bug him: 'Mr. Roman, why don't we have classes on this?' He encouraged me to do the research and create the kind of training programs that I would want to have.

"Well, I like a good challenge, and that was coming from a very lofty and influential source, so I set to work," he says. "The thing I continue to struggle with and refine is how to convey this information to the greatest number of people so that they understand it and can act on it."

Bill Pannhoff, who is a bit of a catering guru himself in addition to being the Owner/Chef at B&B Catering and Event Planning, said he



(TOP) PORTER COMES FROM A FAMILY OF FIVE, SO HE'S NO STRANGER TO PREPARING LARGE FAMILY MEALS, LIKE THIS LAMB FOR A GREEK EASTER CELEBRATION. *Photo courtesy Roy Porter*

(ABOVE) LONGTIME COLLEAGUE MERYL SNOW (RIGHT) SAYS THAT "IN AN INDUSTRY WHERE SO MANY PEOPLE ARE TAKERS, [ROY] IS TRULY A GIVER." *Photo courtesy Roy Porter*

"As much as I have been able to learn, there's still so much I don't know." —Roy Porter

first became aware of Porter when he was moderating the Catersource online forum under Michael Roman's guidance in the early 2000s. "This kid kept sharing all these ideas and thoughts and comments, and I finally called him and said, 'Hey, what's your story?'" Long story short, Pannhoff soon invited Porter to be the forum's co-moderator, answering thousands of questions from caterers around the country. "His popularity just grew from there," Pannhoff says. "He is literally a catering genius, and he always is willing to share."

Brittney Melnick, B with a Twist Catering, agrees. "He has helped elevate so many people, especially smaller caterers. In the best possible sense, he really does know it all." Melnick's partner, Anil Melnick, also adds, "It's rare to find someone who is so knowledgeable who is so willing to share that knowledge, always in a nurturing and helpful way, never competitive. For somebody who is that successful to be that humble is just incredible."

"As much as I have been able to learn, there's still so much I don't know," Porter says.

Storyteller

AS FOR HIS "Storyteller" sobriquet, he says, "People learn best through stories, so I've learned to create stories to pass along knowledge. Every so often, someone will challenge me, so I will have to find a better answer, a better story."

He pulls his stories from the most unlikely sources. For example, he has used the film *Patton* to teach leadership skills for those who want to make the leap to management. He'll teach how Toyota uses lean management on its production line to bring lessons on how to better manage your catering production, reduce waste, save money, and bring more value to guests. He'll show clips of Formula One and NASCAR pit crews, because "If they can change

“Roy is one of those rare breeds who share Michael Roman’s philosophy that caterers need to be unified and taken seriously, nationally and internationally.” —Bill Pannhoff

four tires in two seconds, we can get a plate of food off of an assembly line and into a guest’s hands in 30 seconds,” he says.

“Roy is one of those rare breeds who share Michael Roman’s philosophy that caterers need to be unified and taken seriously, nationally and internationally,” says Pannhoff. “Mike Roman wrote the book on how we should think and act, how we should respond to and educate our customers. Roy wants those same things. He is a teacher, a communicator, and a trainer. If he wanted to, he could have built an empire, but he wants to be an educator instead. His only fault is that he shares too much.”

Catering MacGyver

NO ONE SHOULD be surprised to learn that this “Catering MacGyver” was an Eagle Scout.

It goes, however, beyond scouting’s “Be Prepared” motto, Porter notes. “You have to have a Seal Team Six mentality.” For example, for a wedding scheduled to be held during California’s forest fire season, he negotiated with the fire battalion to allow the wedding to take place. “We managed to pull off the wedding, and the next day I fed 155 firefighters,” he says with a laugh.

Being prepared has paid off. He has dealt with everything from a snake-bit guest to deer attacking the buffet line: “All we could do at that point was bring in ... pizza. The guests all took pictures and had a great story to tell,” he says.

Porter says his risk management philosophy boils down to the quote:

“It’s not what happens, it’s how you react to what happens.” If you are in charge, you cannot freak out if a breaker blows. You must be present and focused.

“If you fall apart, the staff will fall apart. You must be strong for them. When it gets dark and stormy, if you are prepared, you can handle the storm,” he says.

Literally. He always carries a Leatherman multi-tool kit, if allowed by security. If not, he has a flashlight handy for Southern California’s propensity for blackouts—which have happened during more than one off-premise event he has worked.

“Off-premise catering is taking the fine dining experience of a restaurant out into anywhere, so you must be prepared to serve anywhere, under any condition, any time, with a smile. You must either adapt or adopt, meaning you figure out a workable solution. Even though I have what I call ‘Roy’s Rules,’ every so often I have to go back and adjust them,” he says.

It’s all about the relationships

WHEN PEOPLE ASK why he does what he does, Porter says he is in it for the learning and teaching, but even more importantly, for the people he meets. Catersource has been invaluable in nourishing those relationships, he added.

“We’ve stayed at each other’s houses, we share and celebrate our wins, we mourn our losses together. So reach out, introduce yourself. Ask where they are from, ask about the biggest challenge in their business. There are no stupid questions—we’re all here to

learn and have a good time. So what’s your question? Don’t hesitate to ask.”

In closing, consider these words from Meryl Snow, a 28-year special event and catering industry veteran and co-founder of Feastivities Events, “He’s a teacher by nature. When I said, ‘You need to turn this into a business, Roy,’—because he is so free with his knowledge share—he said, ‘I just really want to help people.’ In an industry where so many people are takers, he is truly a giver. You know that old expression, ‘You give them an inch and they will take a mile’? He will give them the mile.” 

See Roy Porter at Catersource + The Special Event!

Roy Porter will have a full plate at **Catersource + The Special Event** this July including hands-on demonstrations, discussions, and his Candid Conversation, which will be on Tuesday, July 20 at 8:00 a.m.

He will be honored at the Leadership Lunch on Thursday, July 22 in Miami Beach, FL.

Go to conference.catersource.com to get your pass today.

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How to Recoup Lost Revenue from the Pandemic

It's no secret that the pandemic has caused trouble for catering and event businesses across the world. With live events put on hold and headcounts plummeting, many companies are finding their profit margins taking the brunt of the impact.

As we approach the road to recovery and look ahead to the “new normal,” many industry professionals are finding themselves wondering how to make up for lost time and recoup their losses to break even in 2021. While the prospect might seem grim, rest assured that there are ways to protect your business from future loss and increase profits without going overboard.

Let's start with a key strategy to safeguard your interests and prevent additional loss of revenue.

Say goodbye to “deposits”

This isn't to say you should start work without accepting payment upfront. Instead, this is a mindset and verbiage change that will protect your time and assets.

Due to the pandemic, there are caterers around the country facing lawsuits because people wanted their deposits refunded. It gets murky in a legal setting, as the term “deposit” is technically a financial term that refers to money that is held in a bank. The money you receive to start work is not an escrow; it's there for you to spend as capital. By law, using the term “deposit” is factually inaccurate and puts you at risk of losing your hard-earned money.

That's why we need to stop calling it a deposit. Remove the word “deposit” from your vocabulary entirely.

Instead, use the term “payment.” Your contract and sales materials should refer to a payment schedule, which outlines the terms and deadlines for a first payment, second payment, and so on. This will protect you if a client tries to sue you, as they cannot claim to have paid a deposit.

Say hello to Quantum Meruit

Quantum Meruit is a Latin phrase that means “what one has earned” and refers to the actual value of the services rendered. In law, the theory holds that a person (the client) should not be obliged to pay, nor should the other party (your business) receive, more than the value of the services.

Simply put, it ensures fairness when you're asked for a refund. Many



WHILE THE PROSPECT MIGHT SEEM GRIM, REST ASSURED THAT THERE ARE WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS FROM FUTURE LOSS AND INCREASE PROFITS WITHOUT GOING OVERBOARD."

clients will want all of their money back without understanding how much work you've already spent on their project. With a Quantum Meruit clause in your contract, you guarantee that you will receive payment for all services rendered and that your clients will receive a refund for the excess.

If the time comes for a refund, you will need to tally the hours you've spent on the client from admin and sales to planning and production. Everything needs to have a dollar amount. Be clear about each item to ensure you are giving them a reasonable value of services. This is the fairest way to go about refunds, as it guarantees that you are compensated for your work but doesn't make your client feel like you're holding onto their money with no return.

Get comfortable with upselling

If you want to increase sales efficiently, you need an upselling strategy. You can always increase prices, but you risk pricing yourself out of the market (especially in this economy). You can take on more clients, but you may end up spreading yourself and your team too thin. But, if your prices are stable, upselling will earn you more money without overcharging or overworking to recoup lost revenue.

If you think about it, we've been upsold our whole lives as consumers. Every time you're offered an added warranty on a product or asked if you want fries with your

meal—that's upselling! It gets a bad reputation, but in reality, it's a great way to enhance client experience while increasing revenue per sale. The key is to have products and services that complement one another so you can draw your clients into an experience rather than selling individual items piecemeal.

Strategic selling involves increasing your competitive advantage by strengthening your ability to communicate your uniqueness, value, and competitive differential to a customer or prospect. To be successful, you need to ask qualifying questions of clients to help you get to know what motivates them. What can you offer them to make their experience better but cost little to no money for you to provide?

Develop a company-wide sales plan that includes upselling and teach your team to make it a habit. Find clarity on your offerings, as upselling can harm you if you have complicated offers that end up confusing customers more than they help. And the best part about upselling? You can do it throughout the planning process by offering upgrades and add-ons as

opportunities arise along the way.

It has been a challenging year-plus for the catering and events industry at large. However, the hurdles we face are often learning lessons in disguise, so keep your mind open and stay hopeful. We've made it through the worst and are still standing. Imagine where we can go from here. 

See Meryl Snow at Catersource + The Special Event!

Meryl Snow will be delivering several sessions on sales during **Catersource + The Special Event** this July, including her Candid Conversation on Thursday, July 22 at 11:00 a.m.

Learn more at schedule.catersource.com.

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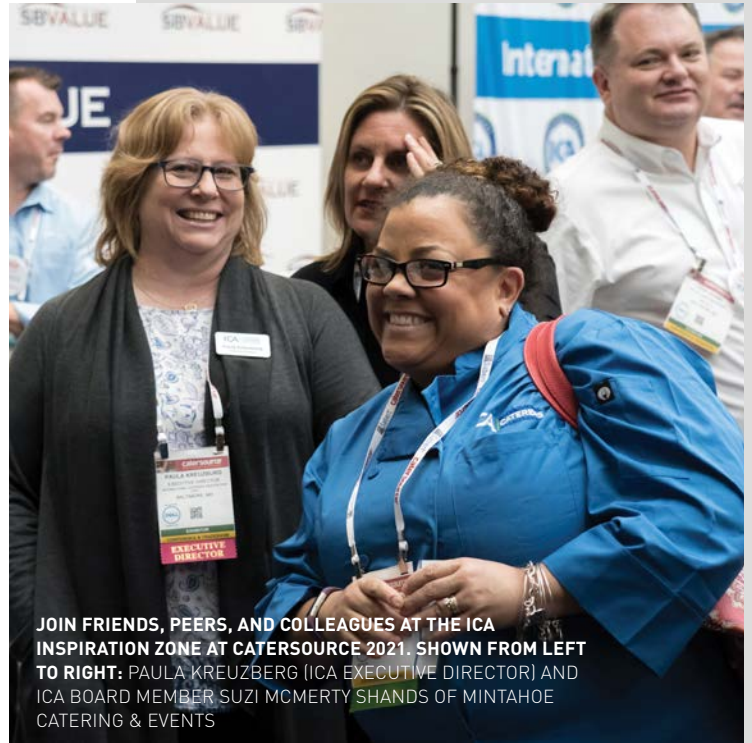


With 30 years of experience owning event planning, high-end catering, and design and décor companies, **Meryl Snow** is on a mission to help businesses get on their own path to success. As a Senior Consultant for **Certified Catering Consultants** and a Senior Consultant & Sales Trainer for **SnowStorm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

Catersource 2021 Sneak Peek: *We're on the Road to Recovery*

To say that the International Caterers Association (ICA) is excited for 2021 Catersource Conference & Tradeshow is an understatement. It's the moment we've been waiting for since we stepped off the show floor into a pandemic in early 2020, and it's a beacon of light and hope for the positivity we know is coming in the remainder of 2021.

So, let's learn together and celebrate this new chapter, shall we? Here's a little preview of what you can expect from ICA at Catersource Conference & Tradeshow in 2021 and beyond.



JOIN FRIENDS, PEERS, AND COLLEAGUES AT THE ICA INSPIRATION ZONE AT CATERSOURCE 2021. SHOWN FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: PAULA KREUZBERG (ICA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR) AND ICA BOARD MEMBER SUZI MCMERTY SHANDS OF MINTAHOE CATERING & EVENTS



CATERSOURCE CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO RECONNECT WITH COLLEAGUES AND PEERS, LIKE THESE ICA CHEFS.

Sessions to set yourself up for success during this year of revival

At the International Caterers Association, our goal is to provide peer-to-peer education that shares critical knowledge and inspiration that allows our industry to flourish, working together to succeed! Each of our sessions will be led by industry veterans who have navigated the storms of the last year successfully, coming out stronger on the other side ready for recovery.



Rebuilding a Sales Team: Strategies for Building Strong Teams in Times of Transition

Our teams are the backbone of our success in the catering industry. Learn how you can rebuild and motivate your most essential assets after a challenging year for greater success moving forward.



Rebound with Frank and Jen

What if your rebound is even stronger than your previous reality? With expert tips from industry veterans with 25+ years of hands-on sales and operational management experience in the off-premise catering world, your company can set itself up for the next chapter.



What's Your Creative Superpower?

Creativity is what sets good caterers and great caterers apart. How are you reimagining your culinary experiences to delight your guests in this new era of making memories?



Smart Selling - The Six Daily Tasks That Create High-Performance Sales

Sales are what keep our businesses afloat. But are your sales teams operating at the highest levels possible? Learn how to turn motivation into momentum to deliver profit during this time of recovery and transformation.



Trendsetting Food Stations in Our New Normal

While events may be coming back, they won't look like they did before. Learn how to reimagine food stations that embrace creative culinary experiences that spark joy while keeping attendees safe and healthy!

Which session are you most excited for?
Visit the Catersource Schedule Builder schedule.catersource.com to add these ICA sessions to your conference schedule.

ICA industry surveys & education available year-round

To ensure we're always providing education that is meaningful for catering industry leaders, the International Caterers Association utilizes member survey feedback to develop monthly webinars, networking opportunities, publications, and a variety of resources that provide value, helping our industry overcome common challenges and remain innovative.

The ICA also shares this survey data with members to help other caterers with benchmarking and provide insights into how caterers are doing things within their company. One such example of survey data was about tastings and how they are handled during this time—if they are executed, when they occur (pre- or post-contract) and if people charge for them.

How are you handling tastings at this time?

• The company is not having tastings:	12.20%
• The company is having tastings:	75.61%
• The company is hosting virtual tastings:	2.44%
• The company is charging for tastings:	29.27%
• The company allows more than 2 people in an in-person tasting:	48.78%
• The company requires a signed contract for a tasting:	9.76%

Over the course of 2021, our members have shared they're hoping to hear more about trending topics such as how to boost sales and create accurate business projections with limited resources post-COVID, tools for hiring and profitability as we return to business, how to handle menu design and tastings in a new era of events, and marketing strategies to help increase demand in new markets.

A recent survey revealed that ICA chefs are most interested in the following topics for future education; you are sure to see these topics come to life this year.

What topic(s) would be helpful in future ICA Executive Chef Roundtable webinars?

• Walking through catering kitchens and sharing organizational tips:	63.41%
• Logistics:	60.98%
• Creating limited menus:	36.59%
• Launching new menus:	31.71%
• Food costing & purchasing:	29.27%

All this and more will be covered by the ICA and Catersource throughout the year to help our industry get back on its feet. 

Lights, Camera, *Craft!*

By Amber Kispert

Working conditions on movie sets are notoriously long and challenging: 16-hour days, often on location in remote areas with nary a break. With so much time spent on set, many of the cast and crew often find themselves in need of a caffeine jolt or other rejuvenating comestible, without an opportunity to leave to satiate their cravings. If they cannot get to the food, the food must come to them. *Enter craft service.*



“While there’s still a catering aspect to it, you’re more of a convenience store on set for whatever their convenience is: you are catering to what their needs are.”

- Tom Krimminger

“Everyone needs to be fat, happy, fed, and watered,” says Allison Krimminger, with MF Scratch Catering & Events in Myrtle Beach, CA.

CRAFTY VS CATERING

Craft service, oftentimes referred to as “crafty” is the all-day snack tables set up during production shoots for the



“craft workers”—the grips, costume department, makeup artists, camera and lighting crew, etc.—to stay hydrated and fed throughout the day in between the formal meal breaks, which are typically provided by traditional caterers.

“They need to feed their people,” says Julia Kendrick Conway, owner of Assaggiare Mendocino, located in the San Francisco area. “The food is really important to those who are working on the set. Craft service is vastly different from event catering, though, it’s almost like a whole new language.”

While catering is usually responsible for providing two large meals a day, the craft service staff must keep a plentiful spread displayed for the entire day, oftentimes in the middle of nowhere depending upon where the shoot is taking place.

“You need to make something mobile and available for people on set, so



CRAFT SERVICE TABLES SHOULD ALWAYS INCLUDE HEALTHY OPTIONS, SUCH AS LOCAL JUICES WHERE POSSIBLE.

◀ MF SCRATCH CATERING & EVENTS PROVIDED COVID-SAFE BOXED LUNCHEES ON SET FOR THE “MOONSHINERS” TELEVISION SERIES.

wherever you are becomes your place of work,” says Tom Krimminger, with MF Scratch Catering & Events. “While there’s still a catering aspect to it, you are more of a convenience store on set for whatever their convenience is; you are catering to what their needs are.

“I don’t recommend doing both meal catering and craft service because there’s no in-between time. You can do one or the other really well, so you can either be the hero, or you can be the one who takes on too much.”

While some craft service providers may bring in a field kitchen onsite with them, it’s generally not recommended because there is too much likelihood of having to move to a different location, Conway says, so it’s best to prepare everything ahead of time in your commissary.

However, larger industrial film catering companies may set up mobile kitchens or food trucks onsite, but those companies typically travel with the production companies for longer shoots. “If there were food trucks in our locations, that would work but that is not the case in our market,” Conway says. “In larger, urban markets, caterers own food trucks for this purpose, but in California, a food truck must be associated with a permanent commercial kitchen site in order to be licensed, so generally they are not a cost saving idea.”

KEEP THE COFFEE COMING

“You have to tailor your offerings in order to accommodate everyone,” Conway says. “The producer’s reputation relies on not ticking off the talent. It’s fun to look at a group of people and figure out what they’re going to enjoy eating and [then] knock their socks off.”

While some craft tables will rotate in some chaffered hot items, most of the food will be chilled or room



ALLISON KRIMMINGER OF MF SCRATCH CATERING & EVENTS STAFFS THE COFFEE STATION AT THE CRAFT SERVICE TABLE ON SET OF THE "IMPRACTICAL JOKERS" MOVIE.

temperature, such as deli sandwiches and pastries.

"You may have one group who loves healthy food," Allison Krimminger says, "and then the next time they want just complete comfort food and sugary snacks."

Regardless of the food, the most important element of any craft service table is the coffee.

"Coffee is the number one thing around the clock," Allison Krimminger says.

While craft services can prep to some extent what they plan to prepare for any given service, nothing is ever set in stone. The Krimmingers have, for example, a few secret items stashed away, such as Red Bull, bandages, medications, and Mexican Coca-Cola. "Day one, you don't know what you're walking into, day two you've got it handled," Tom Krimminger said.

Given that so many filming locations are in remote areas, caterers must get creative with how to keep the food and coffee hot.

"There is almost never electricity on site for us," Conway says.

When working onsite, Conway says she uses traditional Sterno burners and chafers, in addition to Cambro transport boxes, and Cambro hot transport containers for coffee, which also include airpots for hot water for tea. Coolers are the key to keeping beverages and fresh fruits chilled.

"There are a lot of tricks about reheating foods and wrapping them in such a way that keeps everything in the transport box hot," Conway says.

It's also important to switch out food consistently throughout the day to safeguard against spoiled or stale food. Unfortunately, this also leads to a lot of food waste.

"Food that is either exposed on a buffet or held in the danger zone (40 degrees to 140 degrees) cannot be served, and must be disposed of," Conway says. "But that's why we have lots of innovative ways of keeping food in the proper temperature range. In some cases, we can leave-behind snack



(TOP) COOLERS AND OTHER TEMPERATURE-CONTROLLED CONTAINERS ARE KEY.

(ABOVE) AN ASSORTMENT OF SOUPS PROVIDED BY MF SCRATCH CATERING & EVENTS DURING THE MERCYME TOUR.

platters because they're foods that are acceptable at room temperature."

Another tip to safeguard against excess food waste is to prep food throughout the day, rather than all at once. For example, only slice a small amount of fruit at one time, and then replenish as needed.

THE SOCIAL HOTSPOT

The craft service table is much more than food; it's the equivalent of the company watercooler where people congregate throughout the day to chat. One could even argue that the

craft service crew is responsible for the physical and mental well-being of the entire set because if there isn't coffee and the food is stale, overtired people tend to get cranky.

"The number of people that are going to be on set at any given time varies," Tom Krimminger says, "but

everybody will visit the craft service table at some point."

FLEXIBILITY, FLEXIBILITY, FLEXIBILITY

Craft service comes with its own set of unique challenges, such as contending with the elements, early call times, long days, and combating insects and wildlife.

"We're out there, rain or shine," Allison Krimminger says, "so, you

can't be a wuss about the elements."

"We can be awake for 36 hours in a row and still function at a good quality level," Tom Krimminger says. "But, a few days after that we're useless."

However, not everyone is cut out to work in craft service. "We seem to thrive on it, while some people don't like that," Allison Krimminger says.

Conway agrees. "There's a certain amount of satisfaction to craft service because you know that they can count on you even out in the boonies," she says. "But it's hard work, even if you have a groove that works for you. It isn't for everyone."

One such caterer, North Dakota's Homegrown Elegance, provided craft service for a commercial shoot where everything was constantly being upended.

"That was a never-ending moving target, they would change everything at a moment's notice," says Senior Event Coordinator Carl Clemetson. "Schedules are not schedules—they are suggested times. The whole

▼ WHEN WORKING IN CRAFT SERVICE, THERE'S A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO GET A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES OF A PRODUCTION, SUCH AS BACKSTAGE WITH MODELS.

Photo courtesy Assaggiare Mendocino



"THE FOOD NETWORK GREAT FOOD TRUCK RACE" WAS FILMED ON SITE IN MYRTLE BEACH, CA.



THE CRAFTY MENU

A fully stocked craft service table will almost always have some combination of the following throughout the day.

- Granola bars
- Pastries and muffins
- Yogurt
- Bagels & cream cheese
- Sliced cheeses & meats
- Coffee with creamer & sugar
- Deli sandwiches
- Burger bar
- Soup
- Pasta salads
- Taco or burrito bar with salsa
- Mixed nuts
- Juice
- Bottled water
- Tea
- Trail mix
- Cookies
- Fresh fruit
- Candy bars
- Chips



experience is a blur, and I'm probably going to avoid craft service like the plague going forward."

BREAKING INTO THE BIZ

The best way to get started with craft service is to form a relationship with your local film officer, Conway says, because they are often the first point of contact for the location scouts. They can also answer a lot of your questions about craft service and "help you crack the code."

"We love the adrenaline and chaos of it honestly," Allison Krimminger says. "It's fun and unpredictable."

One of the most essential elements to keep in mind if you are thinking about tapping into the craft service market is how to properly price. Conway says she recommends quoting labor, equipment, disposables, and food separately.

"If [a company] just gives a per person cost for all those items together, it will be more than the production company's per diem for food, and this is why most people don't get the jobs," she says. "Each production company does it differently, so you have to be willing to ask questions and adjust your quote process to them rather than expecting them to adjust to you."

Working in craft service is an experience like no other, Conway says. "You're talking with the hair and makeup people and getting a behind the scenes look at how all of this is done. You have to be a little bit of a movie geek to really enjoy doing it because you get to see them differently than how you would in the finished product. But occasionally you do get to see a celebrity." 

CREW CRAFT SERVICE IS ALL ABOUT QUICK AND EASY SET-UP WITH MINIMAL FUSS. PICTURED ABOVE IS A BREAKFAST AND SNACK CRAFT SERVICE TABLE.

See Julia Kendrick Conway at Catersource!

Learn from **Julia Kendrick Conway** at Catersource during her session, "**But Do I Still Have to Wear a Mask?**" where she will lead you through the basic steps to evaluate the specific challenges you may face in serving larger events moving forward.

Go to conference.catersource.com to get your pass today.

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ICA CATIE Awards Celebration: 4:45 pm Room 201 & 202

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21 AND THURSDAY, JULY 22: Tradeshow Booth: #621

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InternationalCaterers.org



Leading the Way to Recovery

As difficult as scaling our businesses down last year was, it is shaping up to be just as difficult to scale them back up again. There is pent up demand for people wanting to gather and as live events come roaring back, it is a critical time for leaders to step up and pave the way for their team members. In difficult situations, leaders must set a positive example, because the rest of the team is looking to them for hope, guidance, and reassurance. ***Here are three things you can focus on now to help your team navigate the road to recovery.***

1 Acknowledge the stress, but don't let it get you down.

Facing a full event calendar with a team that is a fraction of what it used to be is daunting; and bound to increase stress levels. There is a common misconception that leaders should have all the answers. I don't believe this to be true. The best leaders are willing to be vulnerable, admit what they don't know, and then bring together the right

people to help them solve problems. Trying to pretend that everything is fine when you are at your breaking point does not serve you or those around you well. Instead, acknowledge the difficulty of the situation and the impact it is having on you. Don't be afraid to ask for help and don't get overwhelmed thinking about how you will get from A to Z. Take small, manageable steps from A to B and then B to C and so on. Breaking down a challenge into smaller tasks inspires confidence and can reduce stress.



“WHEN A TEAM HAS PRIDE
IN THE COMPANY THEY
WORK FOR AND WHO THEY
WORK WITH, THEY WILL RUN
THROUGH WALLS FOR YOU.”

2 Paint a vision for the future.

People are willing to work hard, especially when they know what they are working towards. Acknowledge and communicate that a lot of the solutions being put into place are short-term as a way to help companies get back to a better place. Asking people to work more hours can crush morale when there is no end in sight. Take some time to think about where you want to be a year from now and let your team know your plans. G.K. Chesterton said, “The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.” When a team has pride in the company they work for and who they work with, they will run through walls for you. Painting a vision of what they are working toward is a reminder that they are part of something bigger than themselves.

3 Invest in relationships.

The greatest equity in the world is created through relationships. Our team members need us now more

than ever to lean into them. As leaders, we must understand their emotions, challenges, and capacity to help them get through the rebuild of our businesses. New team members will be added, people will be asked to do things outside of their jobs, and the scars from last year are not fully healed. We have to value our people for more than the job they do and recognize them as a whole person, not just an employee. Taking time to ask meaningful questions of your team members and actually listening to the answers will let them know that you care about them and their well-being. Talent is already hard to come by, and investing in relationships with your current team members can help ensure that you retain the people you have.

Making time to focus on your role as a leader can seem like one more thing to add to your never-ending to-do list. However, I would suggest that it is the most valuable use of your time. We may be nearing the end of COVID, but the long road to recovery is just beginning and is filled with challenges. It is a road that will push some teams to their limit, and it is a road that will be much easier for those leaders who recognize the difficulty, paint a vision for the future, and strengthen relationships with their team members. 



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.

See Anthony Lambatos at Catersource + The Special Event

Don't miss **Anthony Lambatos** during any of his sessions during Catersource + The Special Event. He will be talking leadership, culture building and how to increase profits. Learn more at schedule.catersource.com

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By Kathleen Stoehr



I was delighted to receive a call from Stella Rankin, founding partner of **Pinch Food Design** in New York City, who was interested in partnering with Catersource to bring unique ideas, trends, images and other beautiful concepts for catering to our readers. How wonderful that we were able to quickly cement our relationship with a striking photo and recipe that trumpets the beauty of summer and also supports our precious wildlife pollinators.

On the cover, you saw “More Honey than Vinegar:” a gorgeous concoction of liquid shortbread, mascarpone semifreddo, vinegar honey, bee pollen, and honeycomb. Enjoy, and do let us know how well this recipe goes over with your clients! —Kathleen



MORE HONEY- THAN VINEGAR

Recipe & photo courtesy **Pinch Food Design**

SERVES: 4-8

INGREDIENTS: MASCARPONE MOUSSE

- 375 g mascarpone
- 160 g cream cheese – Philadelphia
- 150 g crème fraîche
- 100 g caster sugar
- 1 vanilla bean pod – seeds scraped
- 2 oranges – juice and zest
- 2 lemons – juice and zest
- 60 ml Grand Marnier liqueur
- 3 gelatin leaves

METHOD: MASCARPONE MOUSSE

1. Add all ingredients (except the Grand Marnier and gelatin) to a food processor and start blending.
2. Slowly add the Grand Marnier until incorporated.
3. Bloom the gelatin in cold water, then add to a dry pan and melt over a low heat.
4. Add to the blender and blitz to incorporate.
5. Once the mascarpone mixture is smooth, pass through a sieve into a tray (16 x 24 x 2cm) and leave to set in the fridge for at least 2 hours. Portion into rectangles approximately 2cm x 10cm and refrigerate until ready to serve.

INGREDIENTS: HONEYCOMB CRUMBLE

- 221 g sugar
- 13 g water
- 25 g corn syrup
- 1¼ tsp baking soda

METHOD: Honeycomb Crumble

1. Combine all the ingredients except baking soda in saucepan. Boil to 300 degrees F.
2. Remove from heat and whisk in baking soda. Pour into a greased pan. Let cool for 1 hour. Crumble.

INGREDIENTS: FROZEN HONEYCOMB-MOLDED SHORTBREAD GLAZE

- 180 g all-purpose flour
- 110 g almond flour
- 110 g butter – cold
- 90 g confectioners' sugar
- 2 g salt
- 50 g grapeseed oil

DIRECTIONS: FROZEN HONEYCOMB-MOLDED SHORTBREAD GLAZE

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Using a stand mixer, paddle both flours, butter, confectioners' sugar, and salt on low speed until the dough forms a crumbly texture.
3. Transfer to baking sheet and bake until golden brown, about 25 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes to evenly brown the shortbread.
4. Let cool at room temperature.
5. Transfer the mixture to a food processor and pulse to a fine crumble.
6. Transfer the crumble to a blender and blend in the oil on low speed. Once fully incorporated, puree on high until the shortbread becomes liquified.
7. Pour liquid into honeycomb mold and freeze.

INGREDIENTS: VINEGAR HONEY DRIZZLE

- 1 cup honey
- 2 T apple cider vinegar

METHOD: VINEGAR HONEY DRIZZLE

Stir slowly to incorporate vinegar into honey.

TO ASSEMBLE:

1. Place the mascarpone mousse portion on plate.
2. Add frozen honeycomb-molded shortbread glaze on top of the mousse.
3. Add the honeycomb crumble on either side of the mousse.
4. Garnish with bee pollen.
5. Lastly, drizzle the vinegar honey on top using a honey dipper. 

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By Julia Kendrick Conway



Editor's note: I feel so fortunate that **Julia** was able to take time from her very busy schedule to write this issue's *The Digestif*. Her long road to advocating for the reopening of events in the state of California was fraught with a twist on the adage, "One step forward ... five steps back." But she kept talking, kept writing, kept protesting, and knew her frustration with the system wouldn't serve her well. Kept her positivity high.

And now—"It was like the floodgates opened this week with clients!" she recently told me.

If you are attending Catersource in July, you will also have the opportunity to attend her class, "[But Do I Still have to Wear a Mask?](#)" This truly informative session will lead you through the basic steps to evaluate the specific challenges you may face in serving larger events moving forward. Hope to see you there!

When COVID-19 shut down our industry, there was first a flurry of cancellations and postponements; then phones went silent and emails dwindled to a trickle.

I have been involved in community advocacy for years. Sitting in a (Zoom) Board of Supervisors meeting, I heard our health office pleading with businesses to analyze their operations and author guidelines for reopening that would mitigate virus spread.

As a certified Food Safety Manager, I knew a HACCP plan for COVID-19 was needed. I analyzed our own operations, identified touch points, and drafted guidelines for mitigation, with the input of colleagues across the country. Another colleague shared the document with a group in southern California. I was invited to join their weekly conference calls, and out of this, the California Association for Private Events (CAPE) was formed.

At the same time, three northern California wedding planners aligned with the Live Events Coalition nationally. This became the California Events Coalition. In October 2020, both groups staged marches at the State Capitol and garnered the attention of the Governor and the Department of Public Health. After a series of stakeholder meetings, we were assured that guidelines were forthcoming.

In November 2020, the national election and the holiday surge in cases halted progress. Staff positions turned over at the State; new, stricter travel and gathering guidelines were issued. In January 2021, both groups resumed stakeholder meetings with new teams, and by March, we were hearing that work had begun to plan for our reopening.

During the year we were closed, I spent the remaining time supporting our regional vendor group. We shared encouragement and passed along information about SBA grant and loan programs, and other financial aid. We helped fill out applications, called banks, attended local government meetings, and continued to put pressure on the State via our legislative representatives. We met weekly via Zoom, sometimes just to prop each other up and keep the vision of reopening alive.

With first round guidelines released, we are shifting to sharing best practices for compliance, finding vendors for testing, legal assistance for contracts and liability waivers, apps for handling vaccination and testing data securely, and all the supplies and PPE we would need for reopening. Our wedding season began almost immediately, and we are working together to ensure everyone's success. The experience has brought us closer together. Collaboration replaced competition, and new partnerships were formed. In a good way, our industry will never look the same again.

In retrospect, our largest issue with government was visibility and credibility. Comprised of mostly small companies, sole proprietors, and gig workers, the event industry was invisible, even given our aggregated economic impact. Looking ahead; our next round of challenges will involve liability, staffing, and continued work to get our industry recognized and understood. The friendships and partnerships built over years of attending Catersource were the foundation upon which we built this new framework for our industry. While the virus still impacts us, we are looking forward. The new normal is full of fresh opportunities to do what we do so well: make magic happen for our clients and their guests. 

EXCLUSIVE: Michael Cerbelli's: **The Hot List™** turns twenty 14
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SPECIAL EVENTS

Show Issue
2021

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2021 CLOSING
KEYNOTE: **DAVID
TUTERA**
P. 26

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SUMMER 2021



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2021 will mark the 20th anniversary of Michael Cerbelli's: The Hot List™, and here he shares his top 10 moments.

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Connie Riley's career has

gone from being a self-described "chick singer" in a traveling band to vice president of a global entertainment agency. And she's nowhere near done yet.

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On the cover: Cirque Mechanics hosted a Drive-N-Dine Circus at Bear's Best in Las Vegas where they produced their show "Pedal Punk, A Rowdy Circus Where the Mischief is on Wheels." Photo courtesy Jerry Metellus Photography.

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EDITOR'S PAGE

VOICES CARRY

I want you to think about Antonio Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" (*Le quattro Stagioni*) and in particular *L'inverno* (Winter). If the music doesn't come to mind quickly, perhaps you might know it best from the opening of the culinary documentary series, *Chef's Table*.

It begins primarily with a single violin and then cascades into a rapturous orchestral movement. Look it up: you'll recognize the tune in a New York minute.

Vivaldi also wrote accompanying sonnets for each season, translated to English by Armand D'Angour. For winter, the end of the sonnet reads:

We tread the icy path slowly and cautiously, for fear of tripping and falling.

*Then turn abruptly, slip, crash on the ground and, rising,
hasten on across the ice lest it cracks up.*

*We feel the chill north winds course through the home
despite the locked and bolted doors...*

Does this read somewhat like running a business, having a life, during a pandemic?

I've co-opted these words because, like every good networking event, every good conference and tradeshow, every good sit at the bar with colleagues: we are at our best when we put our voices together in unison. Mine is just one voice and one experience, but collectively, this industry becomes a choir of deep bass tones harmonizing with the smoothest of altos and the highest of sopranos. And what a lovely song it is.

"This is the year that we need to come back, talk, get energized, and fix our businesses to expand and grow—and I'll tell you every step of the way why I didn't fail," said Michael Cerbelli at the recent CS + TSE Pre-show Pep Rally, adding, "If you join us in Miami, all of the leaders of the industry will be there."

It's those industry leaders on stage and in the hallways that make this event so important to attend: the company CEOs whose staffs are devoutly loyal and hardworking, the imaginative culinary geniuses who make meals unforgettable, the sales directors who consistently bring in the million-dollar events, the event planners whose overarching creativity is a joy to experience. Why are they still in business? How can you take what they are vocalizing and apply it to your own businesses?

We are moving into Vivaldi's "Spring" now, as the pandemic lifts. Hooray!

Springtime is upon us.

*The birds celebrate her return with festive song,
and murmuring streams are softly caressed by the breezes.*

*Thunderstorms, those heralds of Spring, roar,
casting their dark mantle over heaven, then they die away to silence,
and the birds take up their charming songs once more.*

Join our beautiful industry gathering in July. I hope to see you there.

Kathleen

Kathleen Stoeher

Director of Community & Content Strategy

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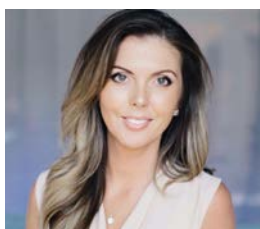
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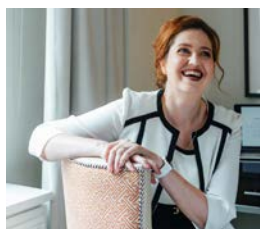
Marketing expert
Christie Osborne talks
how to stand out against
new event pros.



Events business
strategist **Michelle
Loretta** discusses
how to succeed in an
Amazon-obsessed
world.



SEARCH Executive
Committee chairwoman
Kate Patay is ready for
this year's Signature
Event. Are you?



Event planner **Jackie
Watson** shares how
she was able to deliver
three COVID-friendly
events.

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Bienvenidos a Miami

In the immortal words of Will Smith: **"Party in the city where the heat is on; All night, on the beach till the break of dawn; I'm goin' to Miami."**

Those are exactly the vibes we'll all soon be feeling when we head to Miami for [The Special Event + Catersource Conference & Tradeshow](#). But what exactly can we expect from a city that has gone through various style evolutions over the years?

In a word: **Fun.**

"Miami has a feeling of fun, it's never a serious setting and it's always about a good time," says Miami-based caterer and personal chef Elgin Woodman. "And who doesn't want to be in Miami?"

But Miami is so much more than just a sense of fun, the city has a style all its own in everything from linens to food, and everything in between. So, let's break down how to truly encapsulate Miami during an event.

"Miami is all about the experience," says Jeniffer Bello, Miami-based event planner and chair for The Special Event's Opening Night Party. "It's all about that funky energy that comes through. There's this light vibe, neon, bright energy to it that makes Miami unique."

**By Amber
Kispert**

Miami style traditionally means bright, bold, tropical, and beachy. Photo courtesy Southern Floral Company

BRIGHT & BOLD

“All things that are cliché about Miami is true of Miami,” says Heather Rouffe, Managing Partner for Atlas Event Rentals and The Special Event + Catersource Show Ambassador. “That whole Miami vibe still stands true, it hasn’t changed; it’s still what people think of all these years later.”

Whether it’s through brightly colored florals, neon lighting, or boldly printed linens, Miami style is all about making a statement and embracing the liveliness of its culture.

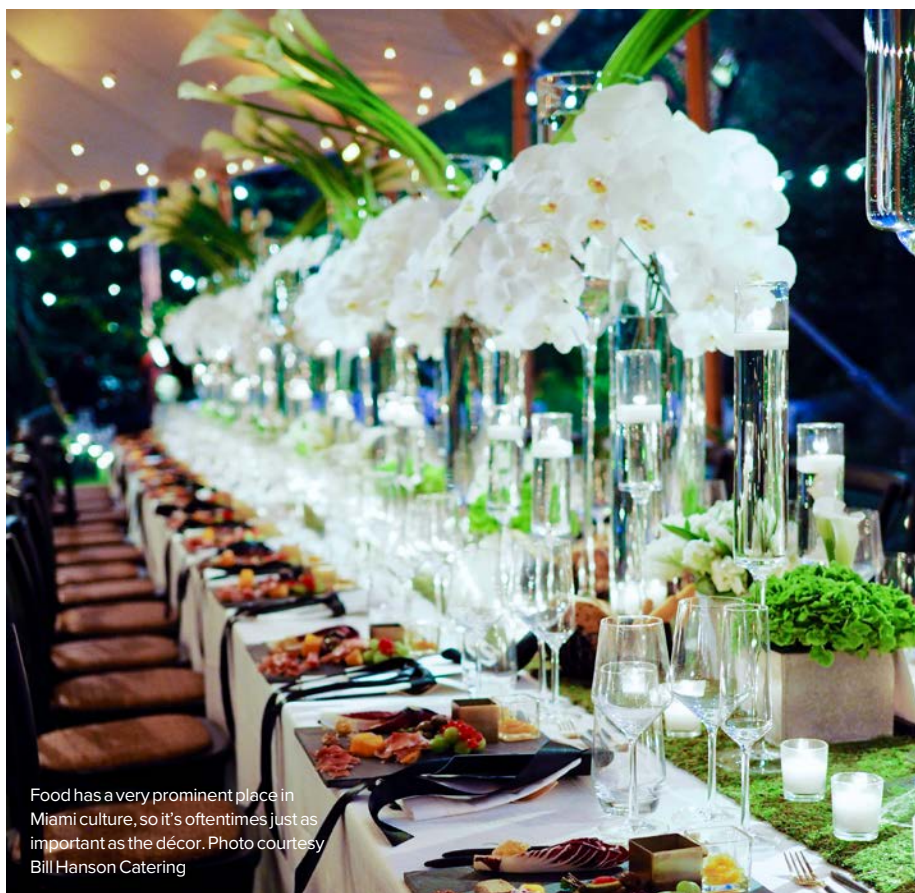
“There’s no such thing as too bold in Miami,” Rouffe says.

In addition to the striking décor, Miami events also embrace bold flavors through the incorporation of Latin-inspired dishes, and the robust and lively musical melting pot. When embracing what it means to have a Miami event, you must think about it from all perspectives: colors, magic, taste, smell, sound, and textures.

“Miami affects all of the senses, and it overwhelms you,” Bello says. “That’s just what Miami does.”



La Hora Locas, which is Spanish for “The Crazy Hour,” are traditional Brazilian performances and are often incorporated into events in Miami. Photo courtesy Bill Hanson Catering



Food has a very prominent place in Miami culture, so it’s oftentimes just as important as the décor. Photo courtesy Bill Hanson Catering

CLEAN & CLASSIC

Don’t be mistaken, though. The bright and bold often associated with Miami isn’t the only trend in town.

“There’s this misconception that Miami is all Cuban, tropical—and it’s not that anymore,” says Woodman, who will be delivering a session entitled “[Miami Styled Food Stations](#)” during The Special Event + Catersource. “You can really do anything in Miami.”

One trend that can be considered very traditional, but also more modern, is the classic white art deco style accentuated with unique lighting.

“It’s about being more modern, more glamorous,” Woodman says.

This Miami style focuses on the materials by incorporating metallics, stone, acrylics, and Lucite to offer a clean, sleek, modular look. Mirrors are also a popular addition to help bring in the modern vibes.

“I call Miami the plastic capitol of the world,” Bello jokes.

PALMS & PASTELS

Another very quintessential design element is the incorporation of pastels, such as pinks, corals, teals, tans, and of course the classic Miami white. These softer colors evoke more of the beach and tropical aspects of Miami.

These color palettes often go together with an added importance on natural elements, such as florals, palms, and bamboo.

“Even something as simple as a passing platter with a palm on it, you get that vibe right away,” says Ashley Deoleo, Miami-based event stylist and Woodman’s co-presenter.

The Special Event + Catersource Show Ambassador Bill Hanson, owner of Bill Hanson Catering, says he’s also seeing cascading bouquets that use a lot more greens than flowers, tables being set with a mix of china and glassware, and couples giving out signature scents as take-home favors.

“What better way to remember a wedding than a tropical scent from Miami?” he says.

Different greenery and foliage can be creatively added to any event. Photo courtesy Bill Hanson catering



TRADITION & TEXTURES

Lastly, a Miami event is all about tradition and nature. For example, by using a lot of lightweight, natural textures such as bamboo and other woods, you can evoke the more rustic elements of the city. “Even when we’re doing more neutral tones, the Miami feel is going to come across in the textures,” says Oniki Hardtman, Owner & Creative Director for Oh Niki! Occasions, and chair for the Event Experience, the Wednesday evening Showcasing Event. “The décor doesn’t have to always be so over-the-top, and in your face, anything natural and from the earth that’s grown in the tropics feels like Miami.”

Tying in with the traditional textures, other décor elements that evoke a feeling of tradition are cigar or mojito bars, and vintage cars. “We’ll definitely be bringing all the Miami magic [in July],” Bello says. “You never know what’s going to happen in Miami.” ●

Vintage cars are often used as a décor element at Miami weddings. Photo courtesy Bill Hanson Catering



Miami Here We Come

Attend Elgin Woodman and Ashley Deoleo's session during The Special Event + Catersource titled "Miami Styled Food Stations" on Wednesday, July 21 at 4:00 p.m. where they will show you how to get "the 305 experience" through food and decor.

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Bamboo and other wood-based materials are used for more rustic events. Photo courtesy Katie Lopez photography



Serving Clients in an Amazon-Obsessed World



By Michelle Loretta

What started as a small-time online bookseller has transformed into the retail giant we know today: Amazon. While many have mixed feelings about the company and its values, there's no doubt that Amazon's story is one for the ages.

We might not feel like we're walking into the CEO's home when we shop with Amazon, but we know what we'll get from the experience: convenience, reliable reviews, adequate customer service, easy returns, and speedy delivery. Amazon no longer must adapt to consumer behavior and demands. Instead, it shapes the market with "The Amazon Effect." People now have certain expectations of buying online, even when working with small businesses.

Consumers think about the Amazon experience with every click and every buying decision. It's up to business owners to adapt to these expectations if they want to survive. That's not to say you must adopt Amazon's business model or strive to be more like Jeff Bezos or Andy Jassy.

No, you just need to be more mindful of the service you provide to your Amazon-obsessed audience. Here are a few ways our ideal clients' behavior has been molded and how we can continue to fit the bill.

NEAR-INSTANT GRATIFICATION

When Amazon came into the market with two-day—now same day—delivery, they showed consumers they don't need to wait around for weeks to get what they ordered. Instead, they can order an item just days (even hours) before they need it.

People adjusted their habits around this new way of life. They didn't have to think about ordering outdoor furniture in winter because they could wait for the last frost and get their new setup in a few days. Need a kitchen appliance by the end of the week? No problem. New delivery estimates are offering a vague range of several weeks. Consumers know that it will come very soon when they buy something, and they know exactly what day to expect it.

For business owners, this means our clients often expect results within a 24-hour window. Unfortunately, special events don't work on the same timeline; small businesses don't have the warehouses and workforces to fulfil such demands. Event businesses are about quality rather than quantity; it's better to give several clients your best work than supply subpar results for many. Be patient with yourself and set intentional expectations with clients to ensure they share your patience.

Consumers think about the Amazon experience with every click and every buying decision. **It's up to business owners to adapt to these expectations if they want to survive.**

See Michelle Loretta at Catersource + The Special Event

Don't miss any of **Michelle Loretta's** sessions during Catersource + The Special Event this July.

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To give a taste of the 24-hour experience, include touchpoints that engage clients even if the product isn't ready. For example, you might not have room on your calendar for the next couple of weeks; but sharing a link to schedule an appointment later on still gives people a feeling of instant gratification. Or, if your consultation isn't until next week, send over a questionnaire for them to complete. Little wins matter, so try to give them smaller milestones along the way.

PROGRESS TRACKING

Amazon has made the delivery system so streamlined that we can track our packages up until the point they land on our doorstep. People don't just want to know when it will come, but they want to know where their package is at any given point. Progress is addictive.

In a similar fashion, you likely have had clients who are constantly asking you for status updates. Amazon has trained them to want to always be in the loop. But, when you're working on a months-long project like an event, these requests can become overwhelming.

While setting expectations upfront can help define the process, it also helps to implement a collaborative project management tool like Honeybook, Basecamp, or Asana. You can invite clients to these platforms so they can see checklists, timelines, and other important details without having to ask you every time they're curious.

SOCIAL PROOF

Do you ever buy anything online without reading the reviews first? I didn't think so. Amazon's review system has been replicated by countless online businesses, setting the standard for user-to-user feedback. Simply put, people trust other people more than they trust brands. A great review system will let the best products rise to the top, and consumers will be more confident clicking the purchase button.

To stand out from the noise, you need to build up your online reviews. For what it's worth, Google shows up the highest in search listings (even above industry-specific sites, like The Knot and WeddingWire), so focus on gathering Google reviews if you can only focus on one place.

It's a small business owner's duty to keep their customers happy, and the best way to do that is to meet expectations and supply top-notch service. Consider what satisfies you as a consumer: Do you love it when you get a small token of appreciation with your purchase? Are you more inclined to write a review when there's a discount offered? You can learn a lot about customer satisfaction by looking at your consumer habits. Pay close attention to how you can replicate your most appreciated customer service techniques. ●

Michelle Loretta is a strategist for the events industry and creator of **Be Sage Consulting**, formerly Sage Wedding Pros, with experience as a stationery entrepreneur herself. With a degree in accounting and a career rooted in her time at Deloitte, she dissects numbers to help level-up businesses' earnings and has educated, coached, and consulted event pros since 2009. In 2021, Michelle launched the Sage Coaches program to match industry experts with event professionals to supply coaching in niche topics. Michelle has spoken at several industry conferences, including WeddingWire World, NACE Experience, and The Special Event.

Welcome to First Class.



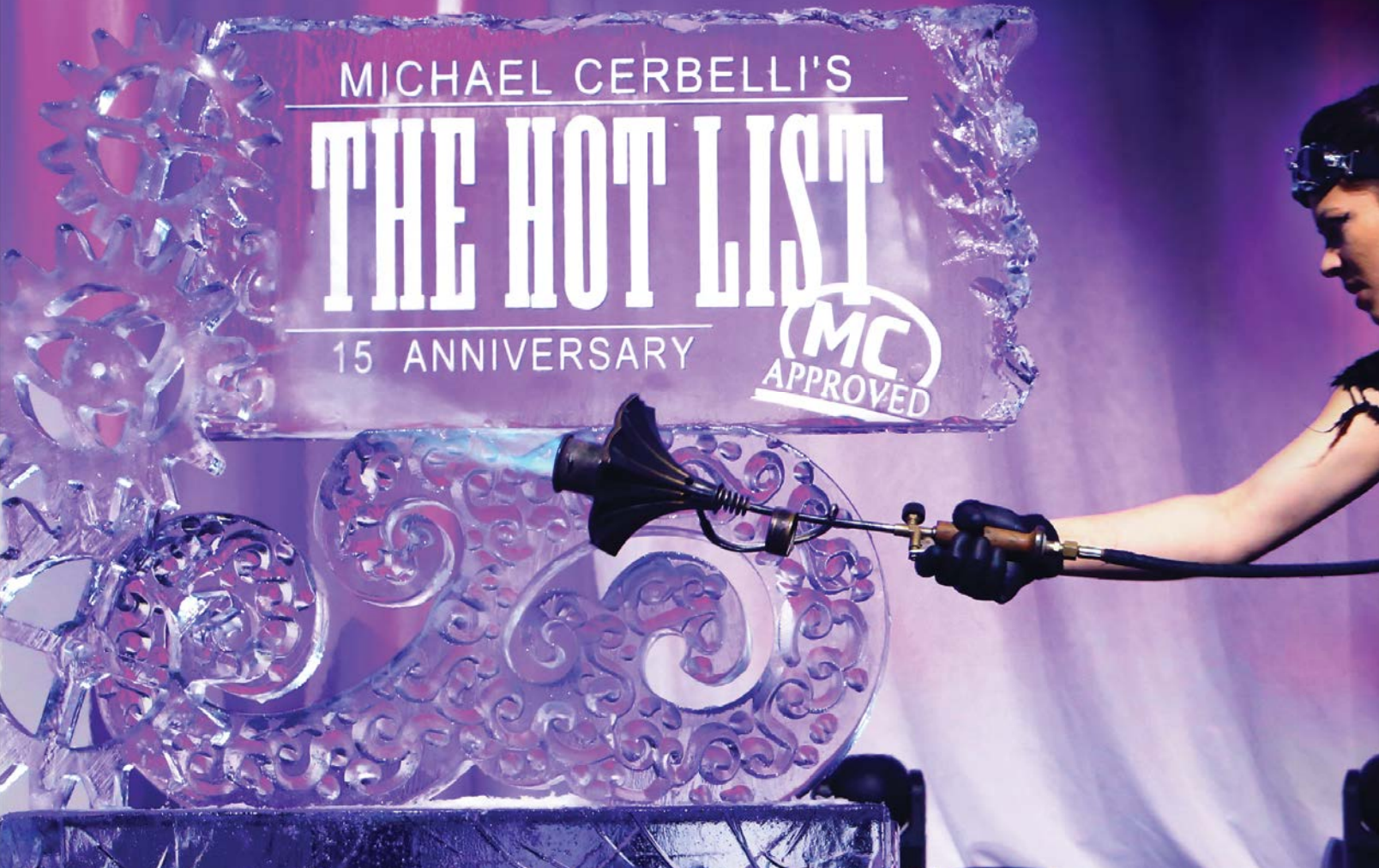
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Michael Cerbelli THINKS YOU'RE HOT

**BY KATHLEEN
STOEHR**

It's hard to convey the personality of Michael Cerbelli with only words on a page. There are wide gestures, big laughs, he'll drop your name in when talking (which only serves to make a person feel special) ... and he will segue from a serious topic into minute personal bits about himself (such as his Brooklyn accent: "*Marthar Stewart*," anyone?) in a most endearing way. More laughs, more gestures, more personal anecdotes. Try to keep him contained? Never, never.



Michael Cerbelli's *The Hot List™* will celebrate its 20th anniversary on July 22. Cerbelli notes that this year's THL will be different than prior years, "Coming out of the year we just had, let's stop for a second, guys. Let's look at some good things coming up, let's look at some retrospective, what did we learn?" Photos (except where noted) courtesy *The Special Event*

Never in a million years.

Like *The Hot List™* that Cerbelli is known for—it is, *and he is*—best experienced LIVE.

You will get him live at Catersource + The Special Event when his *The Hot List* (THL) returns for its 20th anniversary on Thursday morning, July 22; but for the purposes of this feature...words on a page, some photos, and a video link will have to suffice.

THE SPARK THAT BROUGHT HOT

First up, I had to ask Cerbelli about the origins of his very popular namesake event. After all, it's his 20th anniversary; there has to be a bit of reflection and historical context to start any profile

piece. "What happened was," he says, "I didn't really start doing conferences etc. until the mid-'90s. By the time 2000 rolled around, I needed tangible information. I was hearing war stories about an event and how they did it, but I wasn't getting what I needed [to do business afterward]."

The first iteration of THL was born as Cerbelli sat in a classroom and watched a speaker set a vase on a table. The speaker clicked a switch and the vase lit up. "The audience went, 'ahhhh!'" says Cerbelli.

"Then the guy took out a little key and the vase started changing colors. He said, 'This is going to be hot, guys—this is LED technology!'"

"Everybody went, 'LED technology?! What's LED? That's cool!'" Cerbelli laughs. He said he tried to get the name

of the supplier but was unsuccessful. "It frustrated me so much, Kathleen, that I said, 'next year I'm gonna open up my little black book of ideas and do it myself!'"

In August 2001, "Michael Cerbelli's 101 Hot Event & Entertainment Ideas in 90 Minutes" debuted at the Event Solutions conference. "I literally gave away 101 ideas in 90 minutes! I was sweating by the end!"

First year, the room sat 300 people. It was packed. "Next year, we did 102 ideas and the next year 103 ideas and the room just started to grow and grow and grow because people were getting information," he enthused.

"I had a typed-out list back then that we would do on the computer and would give it to everybody: here's your



Through the years, MC has featured a dazzling array of talent during his 90 minutes on stage.

contact information.” He notes that some designers didn’t like that he was giving away secrets, but now, “In a Google society where you can type something in and find it, The Hot List takes it one step further. You don’t have to go searching for it. I’m sharing the wealth.”

THAT’S HOT

Over the years, THL has evolved into a 90-minute format with about 36 hot ideas each with under four minutes on stage. It is just enough time for people to see the idea, evaluate it, and think, ‘I’ve got it now, this is how I can use it for my event.’

“Instead of watching a YouTube video or TikTok or something like that,” says Cerbelli, “seeing it live on the stage presented that way—they know it’s going to be quick, they know it’s gonna be fast, and if they don’t like it there’s a new idea coming in three-and-a-half minutes.”

Says Cerbelli, “I know I talk very quickly and very Brooklyn in the three-and-a-half minutes they are getting in that spot. They [also] realize that we woke up a very small percentage of the audience. But we always say that if there are 3,000 people [in the audience] and you get 12 phone calls, you’ve done really, really good. If you book six of them, you have more than paid for yourself to be there.”

Cerbelli notes, however, that THL 2021 will be a different beast than prior years. “People in this industry were immersed in a horrible year and are just getting their feet wet again. The caterer that had nobody to serve, event professionals that left the business and started new careers.

“It just hit me the other day, you know? We’ve been out of the pool for a year and the water is a little cold. Let’s get in the water and warm up until we can really start swimming again.”

To that end, he is, “creating a show that makes sense for 2021, really makes a wow, and has the right things up there [on stage].”



Steven Brundage created Michael Cerbelli's likeness out of Rubik's Cubes during THL 2020. Photo courtesy WASIO Photography

CERBELLI THINKS I'M HOT

"I've got another Michael story for you," he says.

Cerbelli explains that they were cleaning up their old NYC space in preparation for a move to TwoFortyThirty, a gorgeous event space in Manhattan that just recently held its first live event.

"There were people cleaning. There are old Hot List shirts all over. I say, 'Get rid of them! We're moving!'"

Sara Meletis, Cerbelli Creative's Director of Operations & Production, drops a box of shirts next to a Goodwill bin on her way home. The next day on her way in, she sees the box is gone.

"I'm zipping through the Holland Tunnel a few weeks later," says Cerbelli, already starting to laugh, "zipping through, coming through, coming out of the tunnel and under the roads and there's always panhandlers in the street. I'm looking around as I drive and what do I see? There's a panhandler wearing a 'Cerbelli Thinks I'm Hot' t-shirt!"

Cue joyful laughter.

LIFE ON THE LINE

It isn't just the knives he has had thrown at him on stage over the years, or being catapulted into the room, or shot out over the audience via a bungee cord—literally life on the line—but it's also...personal life. A pregnancy was announced. He went 10 minutes over in 2015 when he brought a special someone onto the stage in Anaheim, CA at The Special Event...and then proposed marriage to her (his now spouse, Denise). His daughter, Kelsie (now 11) introduced his show at TSE in 2019. "It's been amazing stuff over the years, Kathleen, really amazing stuff."

With that, I asked Cerbelli to talk to me about his Top 10 moments over the past 20 years. In true Cerbelli fashion, there are (of course), more than 10 moments. Here's a look:



Photo courtesy The Special Event

TOP MOMENTS OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS

Ideas off the original 2001 program

• Chocolate fountain

MC: The first chocolate fountain I rented was for Mindy Ashley's 40th birthday—I'll never forget it. I did her wedding, I did that 40th birthday, I did the kid's bar mitzvahs, I did a kid's Sweet 16, and now I'm doing her daughter's wedding. Okay, so the chocolate fountain I had to get from Andrea Michaels. She was the only one who had it! Hold onto your seat—\$15,000 for a chocolate fountain! Now you can get 'em for \$39.99! Ha!

• Designs by Sean Human Floats

• The Passing Zone

• Ron Ben-Israel Cakes

• The Three Waiters

The Many Portraits of Michael Cerbelli

(artwork created live on stage)

• Steven Brundage creating a Rubik's Cube portrait

• Michael Papadakis creating a Sunsubscribe portrait

• The Chocolate Genius sculpting a chocolate bust, later then used at the Gala that evening for a great laugh

• Being made into a crayon



International sculptor, Paul Joachim (aka The Chocolate Genius), built a bust of MC during THL 2017

Family Milestones

• Announcement of my daughter, Kelsie being on the way ("The next 'Hot' idea; she's now 11") who also then introduced me on stage in 2019 at TSE San Diego

• Proposing to my (now) wife Denise in February 2015 at TSE Anaheim



THL changed my business

(bringing new talents to the Meetings & Events world)

• Body Marbling

• Cirque Mechanics

• About Entertainment

• Vivid Fireworks in a Box:

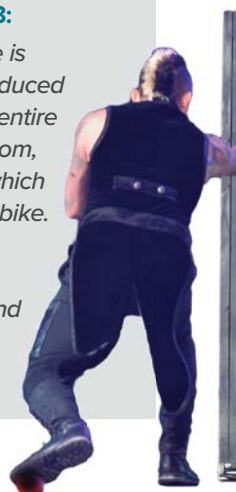
MC: It was so well-received, he went out of business because he couldn't keep up with the response!

Favorite Moments

• Extreme Beam 2015

• The Gantry Bike traveling over the audience in 2013:

MC: To explain to an audience what the Gantry Bike is just by showing a video was just OK. Anyway, I introduced the [previous] act and then I literally ran around the entire convention center—literally! Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom! And I climbed to the top of this Gantry Bike which was in the back of the room. Nobody knew it was a bike. Everybody just thought it was a big truss structure. They're walking in underneath it, no one is thinking anything, and we knew no one would give it a second thought because they were looking straight ahead [to find their seats].



I climbed this thing, the act ends, I say, “let’s give them a big round of applause!” And everybody is looking for me and I’m talking but I’m in the back of the room now traveling over the entire center of the audience to the main stage! Acrobats flipped me off the bike onto the stage. Back then, the iPhone and iPad were new. Every one of them was in the air like this [he gestures up] it was a sea of people filming that moment. Those are the ‘wow’ moments of The Hot List that people will never forget.

- SNL Alumni Tim Kazurinsky reading Cerbelli’s biography in 2013

Scariest moments

- Cards thrown at my head & below the belt
- Being popped up out of a toaster for the introduction
- Being shot out over the audience on a bungee cord
- The Skating Aratas closing

MC: *It was about two weeks before the show and I still wanted one more thing. I didn’t know what I wanted, but I knew I wanted to add one more act. I woke up early as I always do; it was like 4:00 in the morning. There was an email from this girl Jenny, “Heard about your Hot List would like to show you an idea.”*

Ah, okay buh buh buh and I got to the office. Sit down at my desk, press play on the video; I’m into it 30 seconds and I’m like ‘hmmm—what’s going on here?’ A minute into it, I’m like—‘OK, this is good.’ A minute and a half in I couldn’t watch the screen anymore! I can’t believe he’s going to do this!

And they did this live on stage, even though I knew I was gonna get into trouble with TSE show management. They’re a skating act and they’re on this kind of concave disc about six feet wide, and they travel the world with it. They skate fast but he literally spins her around and holds her and the last thing is a rope around his neck and a rope around her neck and as they are spinning he’s



Left: Alfredo Silva of Deadly Games threw knives at MC’s outline during TSE 2018

going this way and she’s spinning that way—in opposite directions! It’s the scariest thing ever and everybody in the front row was like—ugh!—but it was an amazing closing to the show.

- Deadly Games threw knives at me

THL ‘Lifers’

(that have been on for MANY YEARS due to ROI)

- TLC
- Atomic
- About Entertainment
- Cirque Mechanics
- Timestoppers 360
- Brett Culp & Harrison Greenbaum

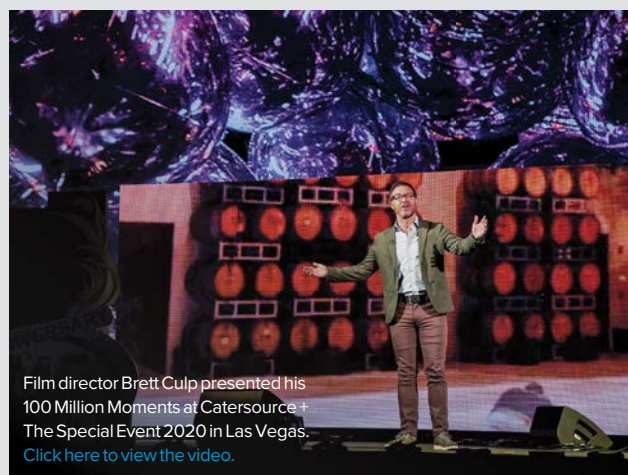


Harrison Greenbaum (shown here in 2018 with MC) took over the pre-show audience warm up after Brett Culp had been doing it for eight or nine years.

Unexpected Moment

100 Million Moments – closing THL on March 12, 2020 at CS + TSE

MC: *Amazing. I say to everybody that is one of my favorite moments of all time—Brett ending the show right as COVID shut down the industry, because [the show] couldn’t have ended with a better message that was never planned. ●*



Film director Brett Culp presented his 100 Million Moments at Catersource + The Special Event 2020 in Las Vegas. [Click here to view the video.](#)

CONFETTI

The Year of Pandemic Weddings

*It is hard to
prepare for, or
even imagine
that an entire
industry could
come to a
sudden, abrupt
literal halt, but
halt it did.*

BY JACKIE WATSON



Tables offered unique touches at every napkin setting. Florals and rentals from Savage Garden

As event planners, we must lead our teams and our clients through whatever unforeseen circumstances we may be faced with. We must ensure the team and the client feel secure throughout the planning process. We are there to keep smiles on faces and provide a positive atmosphere through what can sometimes be a stressful experience for the client, given all that is riding on that event. For the first time in my career, this was not something I could provide. There were many days during which I felt overwhelmed and useless for my team and my clients. I didn't have the answers they needed. A worldwide pandemic was not one of the scenarios I had prepared for and as postponements began to roll in, I remember wanting nothing more than to cocoon myself in blankets and emerge when it was all over.

RIGHT: Individual charcuterie trays, tiny lobster rolls, figs, tuna, and other delicious apps were abundant from Lets Pretend Catering. All photos this spread courtesy Hannah Weddings

Looking back at the last year and change, here we are. A stronger team, a stronger leader, and more importantly, a beat up, but certainly resilient industry. To survive the struggles the live events industry had to face, teams had to come together and show love, support, and dedication to each other's survival. The relationships forged during these turbulent months helped support and raise up fellow colleagues and focused not just on survival, but the future that we knew was on the horizon, even if we could not see it yet.

As mask wearing, perpetual sanitizing, regular COVID testing, and social distancing became the norm, the Jaclyn Watson Events (JWE) team was still lucky enough to host three events in 2020, fully regulation-compliant and COVID-free.

One Jeremy & Chloe

For our first event in early September (postponed from June), we tackled three iterations of the wedding day—replanning their event again and again as it became evident that COVID was going nowhere. In the final iteration, the couple cut their guest list to 28. In order to maximize the contracts that the



couple were already committed to, we created a unique three-day experience for the guests attending. All were required to quarantine and provide a negative test result upon arriving and the majority stayed on the family property together.

Stretching out vendors over several days helped the couple capitalize on their investments, and also helped the vendors keep a larger portion of their profits despite the minimized guest count. Here are some examples:

- Late night snacks were moved a day over and reimagined as a farewell dinner
- An opulent dessert buffet was split between the wedding day and the farewell dinner
- Instead of cutting down the bakery's order, we changed some of the desserts into brunch goodies for the final day
- When the number of dining tables was cut, the budget was migrated to the contracted florist, who dove into creating the true design of the couple's dreams.

The results of these changes provided the couple with an extended vacation with loved ones as they quarantined, a welcome dinner where instead of 150 guests, they had under three dozen with speeches and performances from nearly every guest in attendance. Instead of the toned down and simplified design they settled for with their larger event, they received the over-the-top eclectic design they had truly hoped for.

The over-the-top pre-planning kept all vendors and the clients at ease going into the events and resulted in a successful COVID-free first wedding, boosting our confidence in the future of the industry as a whole.



Coordinating masks with v
finery, a true pandem
Photo courtesy ©2020 JAC
:: Jacklyn Gre

Two

Lauren & Christos

Originally envisioned as a large European destination wedding, the couple decided to move their date up by more than a year due to a loved one's difficult health situation. However, this also placed them in the year of the pandemic and gave us just three months to plan! Due to the delicate nature of their loved one's health, the entire family had been following strict guidelines to minimize chances of exposure and were regularly testing in order to ensure that they would not pose any risk.

Creating a luxe backyard wedding with this family was a truly lovely experience as they found ways to incorporate special touches throughout. A close-knit family—several of them owned homes in the same cul-de-sac—they hosted the ceremony in the grandmother's backyard and moved the celebration afterward into one of the aunt's homes. The family





wedding
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enberg

florist was able to share in the special day and provided a beautiful array of colorful florals to brighten the event.

Unfortunately, the beloved family member passed before the wedding. In order to incorporate her memory into the event, one of the bridesmaids carried an extra bouquet in her honor. Dragonflies are a special symbol to the family, so a dragonfly trinket was incorporated into the bridal bouquet, a memory table of all their lost loved ones was included, and countless family photo albums decorated their reception space. Finally, the bridesmaids' attire was provided by the shop their recently passed cousin owned.

The wedding was intimate, elegant, relaxed but luxe, and full of emotion: Joy in being together to celebrate a marriage, sadness at losing a loved one, stress from the status of the world, and relaxation from a day of peace away from it all. For this family, it was the perfect way to heal with one another, support one another, and bring joy into each other's lives.



Beautiful florals from In Full Bloom brightened the ceremony and also paid homage to a relative, gone too soon. Photo courtesy ©2020 JAGstudios :: Jacklyn Greenberg

Three

Giuli & Ben

Finally, our most intimidating event to date. Regulations stated that 150 guests could attend an outdoor event in Vermont at the time. No problem... a little over 100 guests were invited, but one was definitely VIP in our books: *our client's aunt is Ms. Meryl Snow!*



This was our largest, and therefore riskiest, event of the year. The JWE team, the client, and the venue took every mandate and regulation very seriously. Communication with guests began months in advance in order to ensure guests were aware of and prepared to comply with all regulations.

Again, we created a detailed timeline for vendor arrivals, ensuring that teams were staggered in order to minimize the number of people in the tent at any given time. The bride and groom also assigned their guests into quarantine pods. This in-depth tracking allowed us to create seating pods for all the guests

Voluminous floral arrangements kept the vastness of the reception tent from appearing overwhelming and created what felt like an intimately elegant affair. Photo courtesy ©2020 Emily Pogozeleski (Pogo Photo)

ranging from a twosome to as large as eight. Upon arrival, welcome bags were provided, including hand sanitizer and the weekend itinerary, which also reminded guests of COVID policies.

When guests arrived, they were escorted to their seats by ushers who worked to execute the pod assignments. Each row of seating was separated by at least six feet, spreading out on the lawn at Basin Harbor Club, and also included some stadium seating. This offered proper



A splendid display of fireworks ended the evening. Photo courtesy ©2020 Emily Pogożelski (Pogo Photo)

social distancing and followed COVID protocols, but also created a unique design where guests could access their seats easily. It also provided those seated at the back with an elevated vantagepoint that ultimately gave them a better view than if they had been at ground level!

After the ceremony—which was also streamed for loved ones who could not attend the wedding—guests made their way to the cocktail hour. Here they were greeted by staff members who assisted them in finding their escort card (a set of heart shaped sunglasses) that had the initials of their cocktail location written upon the back. Due to mandates, guests were required to be seated in order to eat or drink. To accommodate this, cocktail hour was held in two tents and provided assigned seats. Some guests found themselves at dining tables, others on unique lounge furniture, all at least six feet or more away from the other. Hors d'oeuvres were plated and carried out as individual pod platters so that each group could safely enjoy a delicious bite.

As cocktail hour concluded, the same pod traveled together once more into the beautiful reception tent. To accommodate proper spacing between tables, the reception tent was

the largest we could fit on the lawn. All tables were six or more feet apart and the tent was required to have 50% or less of its walls up in order to be considered an “outdoor” venue. Various sizes of dining rounds for various pod sizes were spread across the sailcloth tent. Determined to have the wedding of her dreams despite the unusual times, the bride did not hesitate to design draping, chandeliers, pendant lighting, and rentals that matched her vision. The level of detail in the beautiful design and voluminous floral arrangements kept the vastness of the tent and dance floor from appearing overwhelming and created what still felt like an intimately elegant affair.

Thanks to the comprehensive communication between the teams and the couple and their guests, this event was executed beautifully. When evening set in and it was time to dance, no guests needed to be reminded that masks were required upon leaving their seats. It was a terrific experience to witness the adaptability of people when the right effort is put in ahead of time. Ladies had masks that matched their gowns, the bridal party all had matching masks with custom printed fabrics, and in the end, this was such a

non-issue as the event was still the beautiful experience the couple hoped it would be.

At its rawest form

Faced with unique challenges, we honed many of our skills as wedding planners and designers. We do not take for granted that 2020 offered a great exercise in thinking outside the box. Never had we planned for an event in which the regulations we had to abide by were changing every two weeks. Never had we planned, and then replanned, and planned again, the same wedding. This was a test—not only of our skills as planners—but also a test in human relations as we maneuvered difficult waters with upset couples and families. Never had we planned around the concept that by not planning carefully enough someone could actually lose their life! These experiences really bring into perspective what “normal” wedding planning experiences are like. It also highlighted the true meaning behind a wedding day: why someone wants to marry, who the important people are that need to witness it, and what the most valuable things are to incorporate into that big day. It really breaks down the wedding day into its rawest form and that is a beautiful thing. ●

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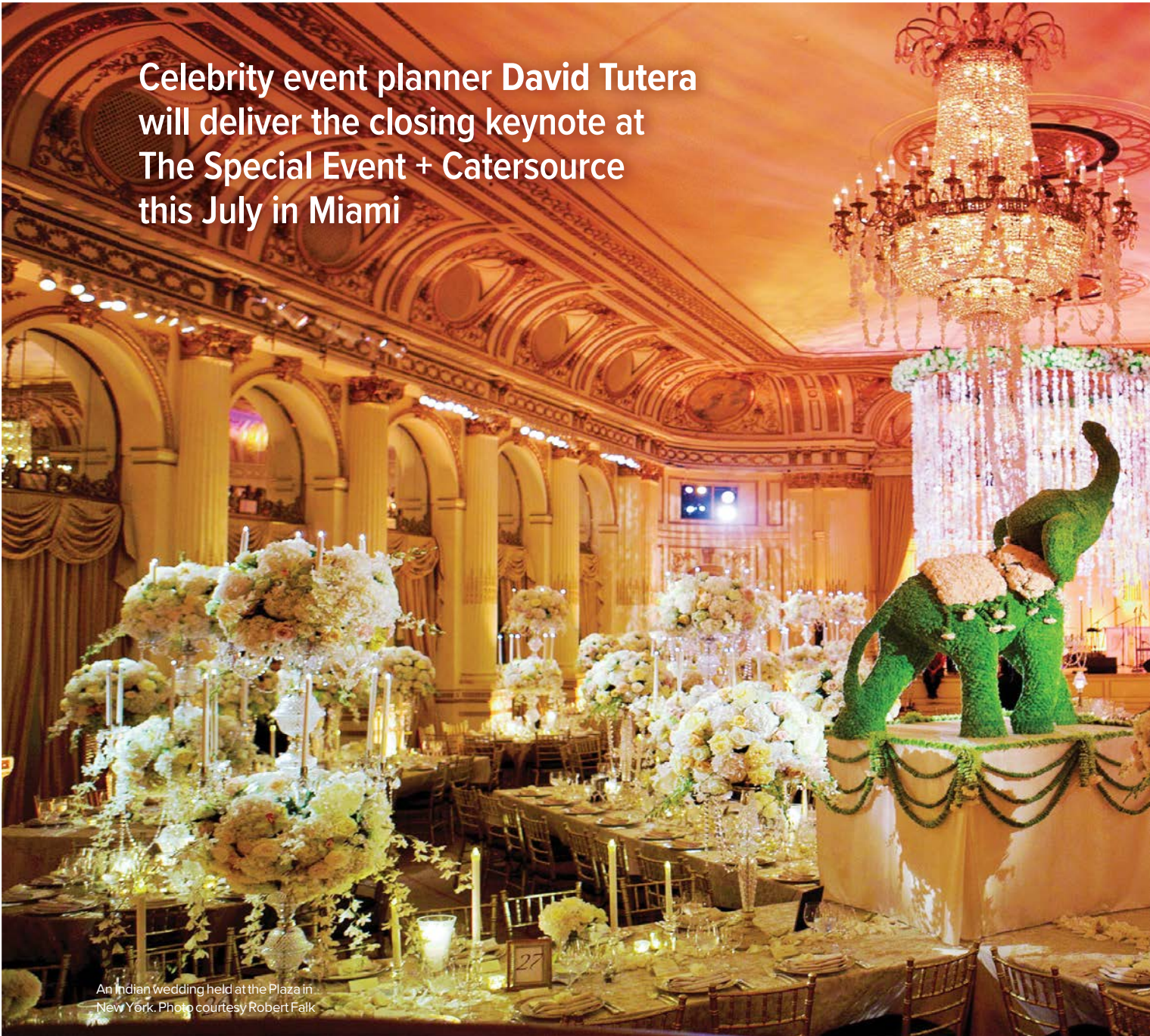
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A Bolder, Brighter & More

Celebrity event planner David Tutera
will deliver the closing keynote at
The Special Event + Catersource
this July in Miami



An Indian wedding held at the Plaza in
New York. Photo courtesy Robert Falk

re Brilliant Future

BY AMBER
KISPERT

Bold. Bright. Brilliant.

“Those three words seem like such simple words, but they’re not,” celebrity event planner David Tuter says.

“It’s often difficult to be bold. And being bright? What exactly does that mean? It’s about shining a light on—not necessarily on yourself—but on the people around you. And being brilliant; being brilliant isn’t about being smart, brilliant is about being present.”

Tuter will inspire audiences this July when he delivers the [closing keynote](#) during The Special Event + Catersource Conference & Tradeshow in Miami. This is your opportunity to hear from one of the industry’s most renowned experts on how to build your business and elevate your career with passion and personality.

BE BOLD

Tuter has been in the special events industry for over three decades, stumbling into it by accident. While



A Bolder, Brighter & More Brilliant Future

delivering singing telegrams during his college years, a 19-year-old Tutera met a woman in Scarsdale, NY who asked if he would be interested in purchasing her small boutique. With the help of his grandfather, who owned his own flower shop, Tutera was able to not only buy the business, but open a new one in Larchmont, NY. And it was at the new shop where Tutera got his first introduction to event planning.

"A woman randomly came in and asked if I would decorate her son's Bar Mitzvah like the window creation I made," he says. "That helped me understand that there was something creative out there that I might be interested in. I wasn't an overnight success by far, and it was certainly a lot of hard work."

By all accounts, Tutera was self-educated re: producing special events, but he says he would be remiss if he didn't acknowledge the most important teachers in his career.

When discussing his creative endeavors and what sets him apart from other industry professionals, Tutera says he believes it has to do with how he interacts with his clients.

"I've always said from the very beginning I don't take on a style, I take on a client's personality. I'm like a chameleon and I adapt to the wishes and the expectations and wants of my client," he says. "The one thing I do is I never tell them it's a bad idea. I always guide or shift them in a direction that gets to the best place."

"Think of it as a piece of wet clay on a spinning board, and you're sculpting your piece. It is the same with a client. It doesn't look the way you want until you see the finished piece, which is when the party is over. So, I'm always sculpting a new concept, designing a new approach. I'm planning a new outcome, which has allowed me to keep myself very fresh, very relevant, and not burned out."

"WE ARE NOT ABOUT LUXURY, BUT ABOUT MAKING PEOPLE FEEL AMAZING AT CELEBRATIONS—CELEBRATIONS CAN CHANGE PEOPLES' LIVES."

—David Tutera

"My clients were my educators," he says. "They taught me the things I had no clue about. They taught me exactly what I needed to know in order to produce for them."

Throughout his career, Tutera has worked with everyone from high-profile celebrities to the White House, and for the past 16 years, Tutera has been seen regularly on television sharing his creativity. But, for him, it's not the prestige he enjoys most about this career; it is being able to do something different every day while meeting different people.

"Every client is different, every scenario has a different outcome, and everything has its own mindset," he says. "I've been fortunate to have done a lot of work across the globe and that has always tapped into my heart and my mind because it's a chance to get to know people that I normally would never have met."

BE BRIGHT

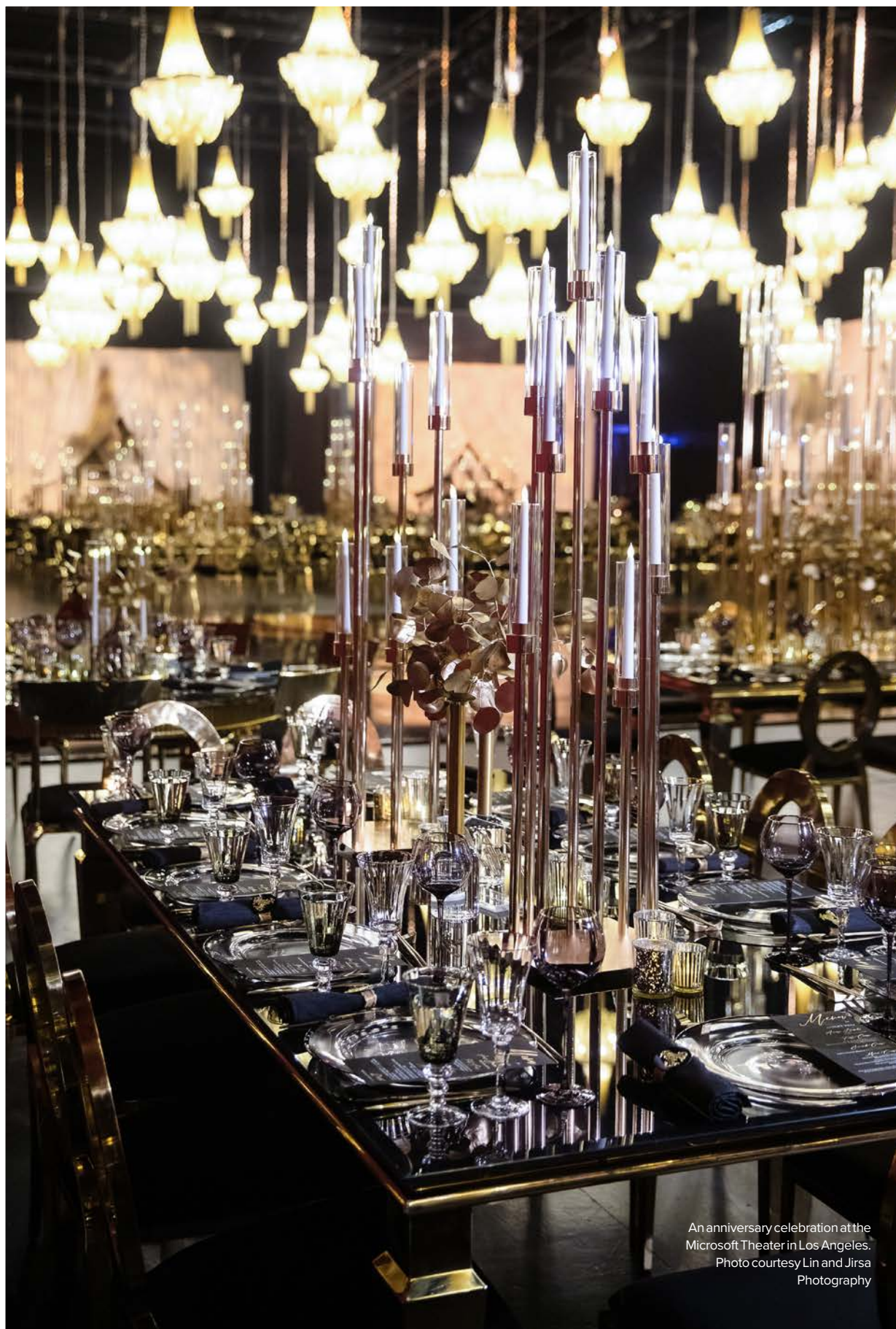
Everyone knows that the past year has been challenging for the events industry, and not even Tutera escaped unscathed. Fortunately, he was able to tap into his other skills by hosting virtual tours, education sessions, and dinners.

"We enlightened people and gave them some sort-of sense of hope," he says. "We were very proud that we were able to step up and give hope and guidance, and I think that's also helped me as well."

(TOP RIGHT) Sandy's Fabulous Birthday Party. Photo courtesy Victoria Angela Photography

David Tutera lives in Los Angeles with his husband Joey, daughters Cielo and Gracie as well as their dogs Lucy and Teddy. Photo courtesy Victoria Angela Photography





An anniversary celebration at the
Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles.
Photo courtesy Lin and Jirsa
Photography

A Bolder, Brighter & More Brilliant Future

As difficult as it was to see events postponed, Tuteru says the biggest frustration for him over the past year was the stark realization that the events industry doesn't have the recognition and respect that it ought to.

"We are an industry that I feel is often overlooked. The pandemic brought a very strong understanding that we have not been able to elevate our industry to where it should be because it's become very clear that we're at the bottom of the banister.

"It's up to us to present ourselves as being necessary and not a luxury. We are not about luxury, but about making people feel amazing at celebrations—celebrations can change peoples' lives."

Tuteru, just like everyone else in the industry, is eager to get back to work. However, he urges everyone not to rush into planning events just yet.

"I can't rush my clients because I feel like they're already stressed," he says.

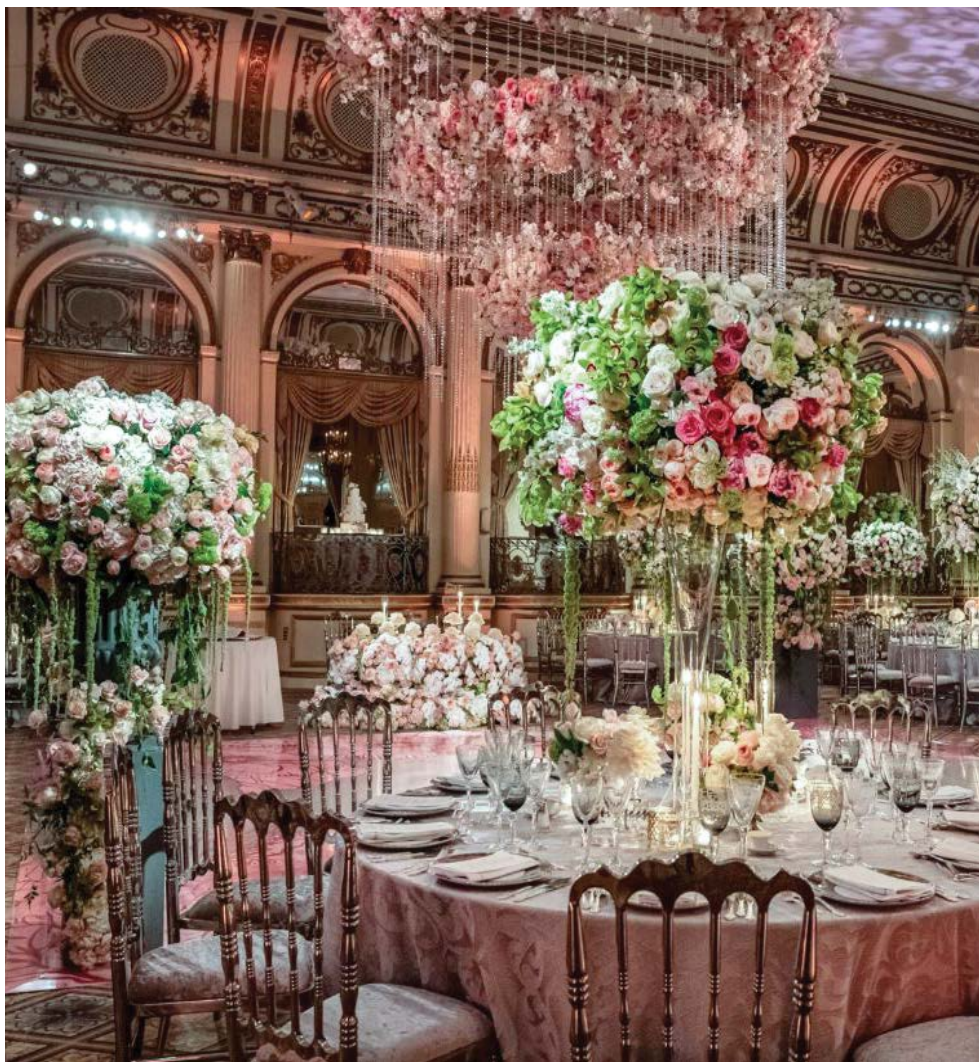
"We have to be patient, and I know that word is not always an enjoyable word to hear, but with patience comes, I believe, more success.



See David Tuteru at The Special Event + Catersource!

David Tuteru will deliver the closing keynote on Thursday, July 22 at 3:00 p.m on the tradeshow floor. Don't forget his **Candid Conversation** immediately following his closing session for follow up questions and networking, a terrific way to close out your conference experience!

THE SPECIAL EVENT™
JULY 19-22, 2021 | MIAMI BEACH





"I don't think we're there yet, but what we have to do now is push for what we need. We can't wait for people to tell us what to do. People in the industry should not be worrying about how they are going to stay in business, they need to be focused on what makes them different, what makes them stand out."

BE BRILLIANT

With a career as illustrious as Tuter's, it is no surprise that he has picked up a few successful tricks over the years.

"One of the things I tell people is that you never ever talk about another

client's event. You always want to remain as if they were the sole client you have," he says. "Also, it's important to ask a lot of questions, even if they are not specific to the project, as a way of legitimately getting to know your client. When you get into that sort of minutiae of emotionally connecting, you hold a little bit more control of the experience that you're providing for your client."

Tutera says he is **eager to inspire** such a large cross-section of the events industry at Catersource + The Special Event because it's time to celebrate this incredible industry.

"Where we've been is where we have been, but where you choose to go tomorrow depends on being bold, being bright, and being brilliant," he says. "We can't be looking at all the negativity and sitting in the gloom, we have to be catapulting ourselves upward."

So, be prepared to learn how to rise up, and how to stand up.

"Arrive with an open heart and open mind," Tutera says. "We need to stop placing judgment on ourselves and start figuring out how to not be a different version of ourselves, but a better version of ourselves. I want people to arrive with a blank white canvas and let me throw the paint on them so that they can build their own piece of art of who they are." ●



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
The Final Night Party during the 2018 David Tutera Experience.
Photo courtesy David Tutera

An event during the 2019 David Tutera Experience was held in an unfinished church in Bermuda.
Photo courtesy Victoria Angela Photography

The David Tutera Experience in Orlando. Photo courtesy Victoria Angela Photography

Wedding at the Plaza. Photo courtesy David Tutera



Catersource + The Special Event 2021 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, July 21

Opening General Session Keynote Speaker
Pablos Holman

Futurist • Inventor of the First 3D Food Printer • Innovator • Problem Solver





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JULY 19-22, 2021 | MIAMI BEACH CONVENTION CENTER

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Join us in Miami Beach for The Special Event 2021

By Kathleen Stoehr

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 7/19, depart Friday morning 7/23

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

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

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



Register Now!

Revolutionary keynote & featured speakers

If there was ever a year to gain a fresh perspective and new ideas, it's 2021! A diverse line up of featured speakers include cake genius to the stars **Ron Ben-Israel**; Event Executive Director **Christina Matteucci**; D&I experts, **Dima Ghawi** and **Shakira Brown**; the ever-popular **Michael Cerbelli** (see feature page 14), celebrating the 20th anniversary of his **The Hot List™**; designer of celebrations **David Tuter** (see feature page 26); VP of Catering Sales for Wolfgang Puck, **Barbara Brass**; CEO/Creative Director, AOO Events, **David Merrell** and more!

On the opening day of the tradeshow floor, join futurist **Pablos Holman** for his opening general session keynote, but don't be late—the session will open with a love letter to the catering and events industries.

As the keynote concludes, join vendors on the tradeshow floor for a day of product exploration, or stay in your seats: the annual Catersource Diced competition begins at 10:30!



THIRTY MINUTES WITH PABLOS HOLMAN

Hacker. Inventor. Technology futurist with a unique ability to distill complex technology into practical tools. A member of the most prolific team of inventors in the U.S., Pablos Holman has over 70 patents.

Intimidated yet?

No? Okay, how about this:

A world-renowned expert in 3D printing, Artificial Intelligence, big data, robotics, automated manufacturing, and cryptocurrency, Holman has contributed to visions for the future of urban transportation, entertainment, education, energy,



manufacturing, health care, food delivery, sensor networks, payment systems and cloud computing.

Don't be intimidated by his accomplishments, however. What is great about his work/life aesthetic is that he breaks things, he questions processes, he even antagonizes people at times, all in order to make things better and more functional than they were originally.

He wants to inspire people to create solutions, to invent, and to problem solve—by looking at the world through the eyes of a hacker.

Finally, he is a fellow who smiles easily, laughs at corny attempts at jokes, and is enthusiastic about being in front of a live audience again.

"For my part," says Holman about his keynote at The Special Event + Catersource, "it is pretty obvious what my goal should be: to help people get past the fear and the panic [of the past 16 months] and get them into a mode of being optimistic and excited about rebuilding this industry. [It's time to] make it better than it was and hopefully make it resilient enough to handle these [types of crises] in the future, too."

Hacker with a heart

"I get it," he says. "I care a lot about this industry, and I know a thing or two about it, so hopefully I can connect with the audience and help them get [their businesses] back on track. I want

to be sensitive to what people have been going through."

Holman noted that, "I suffered the same thing everyone did. I want to meet people in various industries and learn from them. I want to meet other smart and interesting people and not getting to speak meant not getting to do that for a year. It really got to me."

Zoom speaking doesn't do it for him either, he says, because he can't feel a connection with the audience. "It's not rewarding for me," he says. Much of it has to do with the overall live show experience and that one crucial element that's best done in person: networking.

"What I realized is there are two points of value here. You have the content—what you're putting on stage, the educational piece...but I'm not sure people would come to the conference at all if they weren't getting the other part, which is being out in the lobby making friends, going to happy hour, your late-night opening event party, that stuff? That stuff is where the action is. You make those friends and those networking relationships."

See Pablos Holman LIVE

At the Opening General Session on the tradeshow floor, Holman will offer his unique ideas to the audience, and then answer a few questions as well. Be prepared to be inspired on **Wednesday morning, July 21 at 9:00 a.m.** The Opening General Session is included in the purchase of any pass, from All Access to tradeshow only.

Schedule at a Glance

MONDAY

Connect Live event at the Hard Rock Miami
7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

TUESDAY

Conference education
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Opening Night Party at The Fillmore Miami Beach
7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Opening General Session
9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Tradeshow floor hours
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Conference education
11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Event Experience at Jungle Island
6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

SEARCH's Annual Signature Event at Paradise Plaza
9:30 p.m. to Midnight

THURSDAY

Michael Cerbelli's: The Hot List™
8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Tradeshow floor hours
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Conference education
10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Leadership Lunch at the W Hotel
11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

David Tutera's Be BOLD closing session
3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Closing Night Party—An Industry Celebration
7:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.
Ballroom C & B



Diversity & Inclusion

The social unrest from the past year not only provided the impetus for real change, but it has also prompted reflection into the need for a more meaningful balance of diversity and equality within our industries, events included. These shifts in the industry's foundation will grow as we make our way through 2021, and The Special Event is poised to help you with these transitions and conversations.

A fight for social justice saw Black Lives Matter movements launch once more in countries across the globe, creating urgency in the discussion about equality. Going forward, businesses will need to be intentional and genuine with their commitment to diversity and how they present their brand to the market. And The Special Event has you covered.

Beyond D&I experts **Dima Ghawi** and **Shakira Brown**, The Special Event will have a full slate of sessions this year focused on diversity and inclusion, including: "Designing Inclusive Events"



Diversity & Inclusion will be a popular topic of discussion during The Special Event + Catersource as the events industry continues its reflection into the need for a more meaningful workforce balance, which in turn has led to increased discussions on how to transition into more equality-focused business. Photos courtesy WASIO Photography

with **Pawntra Shadab**; "Diversity and Inclusion: Making Everyone Feel Welcome" with **Kathleen Zemaitis**; and "Diversity and Inclusion Shine Through" with **Amanda Ma**.

Co-located conference Catersource will also have a few D&I sessions on tap, which an All Access Pass can get you in to. Those sessions are: "Are You Tokenizing? How to Genuinely Market to LGBTQ+ Clients" with **Brittney Drye**; and "The JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) Lifestyle: A Discussion" with **Jamie Quickert**, **Greg DeShields** and **Brian Green**.



Candid conversations

Always a favorite at Catersource, Candid Conversations have now been added to The Special Event. Candid Conversation sessions are free-wheeling “unsessions”—no set agenda or Powerpoint presentations; just an industry professional at the front of the room, ready to answer your questions about topics they excel at. Bring culinary questions to Food Network stars **Ron Ben-Israel** and **Emily Ellyn**; ask **David Tutera** the burning design question you’ve always wanted answered; **Meryl Snow** and **Kate Patay** will be available to talk marketing and sales, and more. 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, and buy from. These exhibitors are here to help you grow your business and recognize the potential you have for 2021 and beyond. Additionally, a culinary competition and the excitement of the Opening General Session with keynote **Pablos Holman**, Michael Cerbelli’s: The Hot List™ on Thursday morning, and Closing Session with keynote **David Tutera**.

▲ By walking the tradeshow floor, attendees can see the latest products ranging from florals to entertainment to rental companies. Photo courtesy WASIO Photography



Industry accolades: award recipients

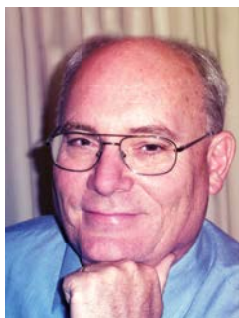
Each year, we honor industry leaders who we, at The Special Event + Catersource, feel have made a significant and positive impact on our industries. Join us in celebrating remarkable individuals at our annual **Leadership Lunch on Thursday, July 22.**

First—start your experience in gratitude by enjoying the music of four-time Grammy award winner **Tomasito Cruz**



(above, right), who will blend his international flair of ChaChaCha, Son, Rumba, Afro, Timba, Guaracha, Pilon and Bolero to give this event a burst of lively Cuban flavor.

Next, learn leadership skills from keynote **Christina Matteucci** (above, left), Executive Director at David Beahm Experiences. Enjoy a beautiful lunch with your colleagues and peers, and finally, celebrate with recipients **Roy Porter** (Michael Roman Lifetime Achievement award); **Robin Selden** (Carbotti award) and **Connie Riley** (Special Events Gala Lifetime Achievement award), as well as the **surprise award recipient of the Steve Kemble award.**



(left) **Roy Porter**;
(above) **Robin Selden**
and (lower left) **Connie Riley**



2020 Carbotti Award Winner, Larry Green.
Photo courtesy WASIO Photography





THE MIAMI WILL SERVE
VENUE FOR THIS YEAR'S
NIGHT PARTY. PHOTO
SY AVABLU / RYAN FORBES



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 JULY 19

CHAIR: Tracy Davis-Fox,
Party Artistry

On Monday evening, head to the Hard Rock Café Miami for an exciting opener to the week. As we all come together after more than a year apart, join us in reconnecting with old acquaintances and find new friends as we all prepare to be reinvigorated for the future.

TUESDAY JULY 20

CHAIRS: Jeniffer Bello, JB Experiences; Shalisa James, Entertainment Central Productions; Cari Petroselli, Otherwise Production Group

The Opening Night Party at the Fillmore Miami Beach (shown above), titled Euphoria, will offer an immersion into the senses of sight and sound. This evening will be highlighted by high energy, fresh entertainment, and an ambiance where

guests are surrounded by rich lighting, lush foliage, and colorful bursts of floral accents. Taste buds will intensify via succulent culinary eats accompanied by signature cocktails that will be sure to push the bounds of flavor.

WEDNESDAY JULY 21

CHAIRS: Oniki Hardtman, Oh! Niki Occasions; Christi Carey, Your Destination Connect

The Event Experience places a keen eye on food and beverage trends in the lush setting at Jungle Island in Miami. Transportation will be provided to and from the event from the Miami Beach Convention Center, as well as the Loews hotel property. Look for an F&B showcase that will inspire your upcoming menus!

THURSDAY JULY 22

CHAIR: Chad Everett, Events by Galaxy

James Keller said, "...a candle loses nothing by lighting another candle," and that is the inspiration for a gathering like no other. The Closing Night Party, held in Ballrooms B & C at the Miami Beach Convention Center will certainly wow you with its transformation from conference rooms to over-the-top industry celebration! Join us as we reignite our precious industry, darkened for too long. Celebrate with colleagues amidst an entertainment-filled experience as we wrap up a great week for our industry and embark on our industry rebuild. The time has come to celebrate the hope, love, and light that we instill with steadfast dedication into every event we create.



Networking is the key to any successful conference. Last year's Opening General Session even focused on it. Photos courtesy WASIO Photography



Friends and colleagues can gather together during the Opening Night Party. Photo courtesy WASIO Photography

Networking opportunities

Beyond the evening events, pass time has been increased between sessions to allow more time to say hello and move between tradeshow floor and conference rooms. Most sessions allow 30 minutes pass time. There is a one-hour break for lunch in the conference area each day as well.

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



30 CEH (Continuing Education Hours) credits are American Culinary Federation-approved



CPCE (Certified Professional in Catering & Events) Fast Track classes will be available at the conference



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

Associations & groups

Speaking of which, a great number of 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:

- **American Culinary Federation (ACF)**
- **Association for Wedding Professionals International (AFWPI)**
- **Black in Events**
- **Certified Catering Consultants (CCC)**
- **International Caterers Association (ICA)**
- **International Caterers Association Educational Foundation (ICAEF)**
- **Leading Caterers of America (LCA)**
- **Live Events Coalition (LEC)**
- **National Association for Catering and Events (NACE)**
- **SEARCH Foundation**
- **Tourism Diversity Matters**
- **Wedding International Professionals Association (WIPA)**

Meet. Connie Riley,

the Special Events
Lifetime Achievement
Award Winner



By Sue
Pelletier

Connie Riley's career has gone from being a self-described "chick singer" in a traveling band to vice president of a global entertainment agency. And she's nowhere near done yet.

When you ask people in the business how they would describe this year's Special Events Lifetime Achievement award winner Connie Riley, CMP, CSEP Emeritus, the words just flow: Trustworthy. Honest. Fearless. Hardworking. Leader. Advocate. Mentor. Innovator. Rock Star. But the most descriptive may be the Mandarin word "Lǐjiě", says Robert Rogers, CSEP, with Hong Kong-based Events Man, who has known and worked with Riley for years in her role as vice president with T. Skorman Productions in Orlando.

Lǐjiě means to have a deep understanding of something, "the way an old boat builder knows how to build a boat that can withstand the roughest sea," Rogers said. "Connie Riley's 'Lǐjiě' of talent management is built on years of experience and her unsurpassed emotional intelligence."

Adds Heather Pilcher, CSEP, CMP, CEO/Executive Producer, Blue Spark Event Design: "Connie Riley is a force within our industry. Everyone knows her or knows of her either through her work or through her service within the industry. We are blessed to have her involved. She makes our industry better."

FROM STAGE TO AGENCY

When people call her a rock star, they're not speaking metaphorically. Riley parlayed her love of singing and performing into an early career as a singer in a society band in Washington, DC, and then in a traveling band playing everything from disco hits to jazz and hard-core rock-and-roll, complete with then-legal homemade pyrotechnics. She learned the basics of production and operations during her time performing everywhere from supper clubs to a main stage at the Calgary Stampede.

"We learned it wasn't our job to bring the people to the club, but it was our job to keep them there," she said. "We were already training how to work in the business."

So how did she go from being a self-described "chick singer" to vice president of a global entertainment agency? When the time came to give up her life on the road 33 years ago, Ted Skorman offered Riley an opportunity

to open the corporate department of T. Skorman Productions, and she jumped at it. Orlando, where the agency is based, was on the brink of transforming from a small town to a major entertainment and convention hub, and "we were at the right place at the right time" to expand with the city, she said. Riley has since worked in all aspects of the business, from logistics and operations to sales.

"Our strength has always been not just acting as an agent, but producing the entertainment as well," she said.

But don't short-change the importance of that agent experience, says Rogers.

"In the past all the agents I worked with did little more than make a couple calls and charge a small fortune, he said. "Connie showed me the value that a good agent brings to an event. Her search for just the right act includes poignant questions about goals, desires, and client dreams. Her presentation includes potential pitfalls and possible highlights. She understands exactly what the artists need to make it the best show possible, the obstacles a producer faces, and the attributes a venue offers. Onsite she is there for delivery to iron out any unforeseen circumstances. She is honest and has a high care factor about her work."

WHAT'S NEXT

The combination of caring agent and high production values placed T. Skorman in good stead as the world around them changed dramatically in 2020. They had to quickly shift from providing live to custom virtual entertainment.

"Connie Riley is a force within our industry. Everyone knows her or knows of her either through her work or through her service within the industry. We are blessed to have her involved. She makes our industry better."

— Heather Pilcher

Meet Connie Riley

"We find the talent, we write the script, we produce it, we film it, we edit it, we get the client approval, and it's all TV-level quality," Riley said.

Additionally, since live music takes up a lot of bandwidth and could be iffy if an attendee's internet connection isn't great, the demand now is more for non-music entertainment ranging from magic shows to wellness.

"We're building an unbelievable catalogue of talent," she said.

While she fully anticipates in-person events will return, Riley also believes the increased participation clients have been getting during this dip into digital will mean the virtual element will be here to stay as a hybrid complement to live events.

"I'm really excited about what's to come," she said. "To be in the entertainment business, you must be chameleons, innovators, and trend-setters. It's going to be different, and it's going to be exciting."

GIVING BACK

If there's anything that ignites Riley's passion more than helping clients and her ever-growing entertainment "family," it's volunteering her time and energy to help others both in and outside of the business.

"My mother instilled in us that service is an important part of life," she said. "She was an unbelievable mentor."

Riley's volunteering started at age 14 when she served as a candy striper through the American Red Cross. She also formed a Neighborhood Watch for her area and has been a lifelong supporter of organizations such as Be the Match. Professionally, she has volunteered her time for the International Live Events Association (ILEA), including having served as president, as well as with Meeting Professionals International (MPI).

"Connie has made a huge impact in our industry through her strong advocacy for our industry, her desire to bring 'best in class' entertainment solutions forward and her desire to be the best role model she can be for the

industry," said Kathy Miller, Managing Director, Get Real Training and Development, who has worked with Riley both professionally and through volunteering with ILEA. "She shows that anything is possible with grit, hard work, and dedication."

Having worked as an entertainer and an agent in a heavily male-dominated world, Riley makes a point of mentoring young women who are trying to make it in the tough world of entertainment.

"As a female of my generation, I was never tall enough, never skinny enough, never sang well enough—the emphasis was always on the negatives, never the positives," she said. "That's why it's a huge mandate for me to remind the girls I represent that this is the best time of your life—enjoy it! I make sure to make it safe and comfortable for them so they can do their best work."

Riley also loves speaking to elementary schoolkids about careers in the entertainment industry. While she has adored being able to work with "bucket list" celebrities such as James Brown and Patti LaBelle, the energy she gets from working with kids and being able to pass on her passion for her work to the next generation has been even more fulfilling, she said.

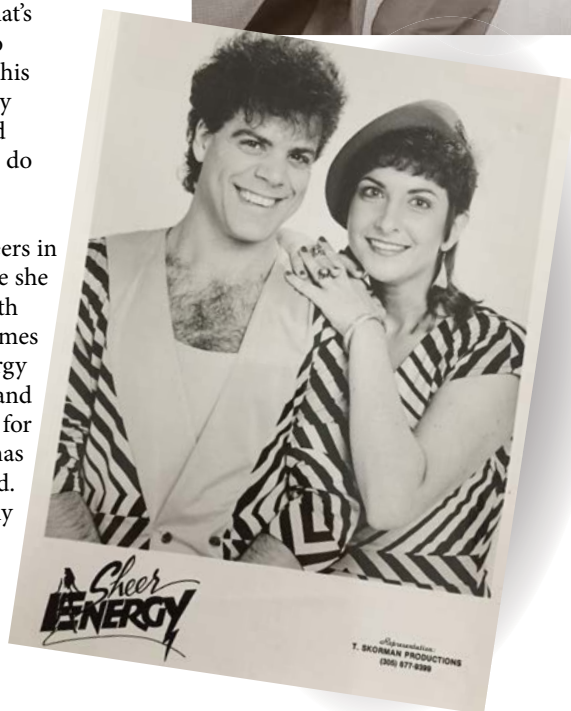
"The younger kids are definitely my favorites," she continues. "I come out of those classes of elementary school kids on cloud nine."

Part of that may be because she's still a bit of a kid herself.

"I'm not afraid of my age because age is all in my mind," she laughs. "I'm not a chic girl. I don't love designer clothes. It's the little things that make me happy—it can be as simple as a song."

Her philosophy is equally simple: Enjoy what you do.

"If you enjoy what you do, the rewards are endless. It's been an amazing career—and it's not over. Especially now, there's going to be so much to discover and rebuild," she said. "One of our sayings is, 'Always reach above your head.' Go for it." ●



(Top) In 1982 Connie Riley performed "Steam Heat" as part of a 1940's segment during the "Sheer Energy Dinner Show." (Above) A 1984 'Sheer Energy' band promotional headshot.



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ON TREND

Destination Unknown

2020 was the year of the backyard wedding, and 2021 is shaping up to possibly be the year of the destination wedding, as unbelievable as that may sound given that we're still in the middle of a pandemic.

By Amber Kispert



Scotland

Mango Muse Events

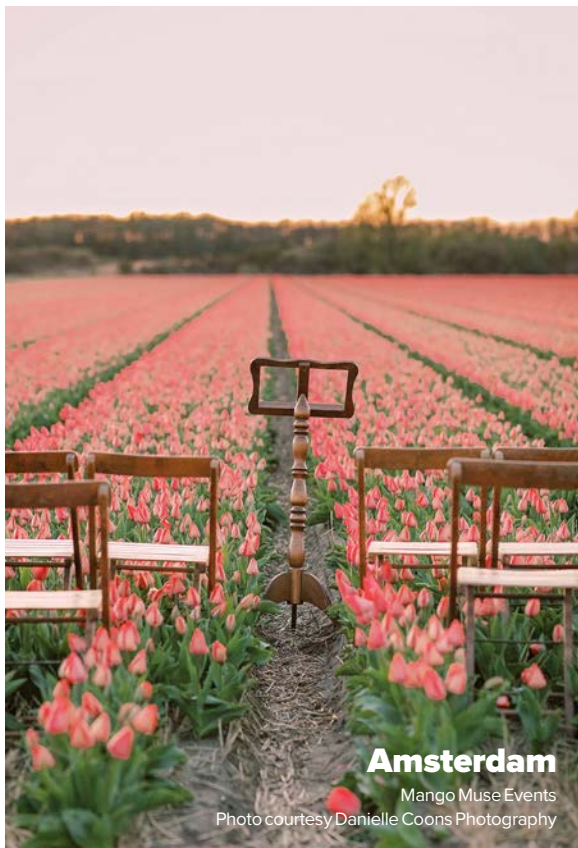
Photo courtesy Danielle Coons Photography



Cabo San Lucas

Blue Dessert Cabo

Photo courtesy Eugene Dela Cruz, OneSeven Agency



Amsterdam

Mango Muse Events

Photo courtesy Danielle Coons Photography



France

Mango Muse Events

Photo courtesy Julia Winkler

“I do think there is something special about destination weddings,” says Jamie Chang

owner of San Francisco’s Mango Muse Events. “Right now, everyone is so pent up, they are desperate to do something special. I think people are going to go nuts this year.”

In a normal year, up to 25% of couples getting married choose a destination wedding, and for U.S. couples, around 40% of destination weddings take place internationally, [according to a study by Research and Markets](#). But, as you can imagine, it’s been a rough road for destination weddings over the past year.

“Destination weddings in particular took a huge hit because it’s a combination of travel and parties, and that combo is the worst possible combo for COVID,” Chang says. “Until recently, it’s been just kind of sleeping, kind of hibernating.”

In January, a [survey conducted by Florida Panhandle](#) stated that over 50% of people would not fly for a wedding under any circumstances.

But that was then. “Destination weddings are coming back in full force,” Chang says.

WHY A DESTINATION WEDDING?

Destination weddings are anticipated to continue an upward trajectory in popularity for many reasons. Not only are they often considered less expensive than traditional weddings; they can also help cure the increased cases of cabin fever for couples and guests who may also be facing Paid Time Off caps. Additionally, couples are looking elsewhere for their nuptials as they continue to find that their local wedding venues are closed, have limited weekend availability due to increased competition among postponed weddings, or they can’t accommodate their desired guest counts due to state capacity restrictions.

Even though some couples are taking the plunge this summer, many are aiming for Q3-2021 and beyond.

Working with couples to execute a wedding close to home during the past year has been challenging in and of itself. Adding a destination into the mix offers challenges and considerations even more numerous.

“Couples are being a little more intentional about how they plan their destination weddings,” Chang says.

When working with couples, Chang says planners are seeing two extremes: those who are focused on comfort, and those who are focused on the party.

“On one side you have the couples who want to have all of the COVID things: comfy seating, lots of space, different options for post dinner activities—easy to come to and easy to be a part of,” she says. “But you also have those going in the opposite direction: this is their chance to kind of go nuts.”

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

One of the first pieces that couples must decide on when planning their destination wedding is obviously the location, which has become even more important as planners and couples evaluate locales based on local COVID-19 guidelines, federal flight restrictions, and venue availability.

For example, several destination wedding spots are considered low-risk, and in some cases no-risk, in relation to COVID-19. Other destinations don’t have the same mask or capacity mandates.

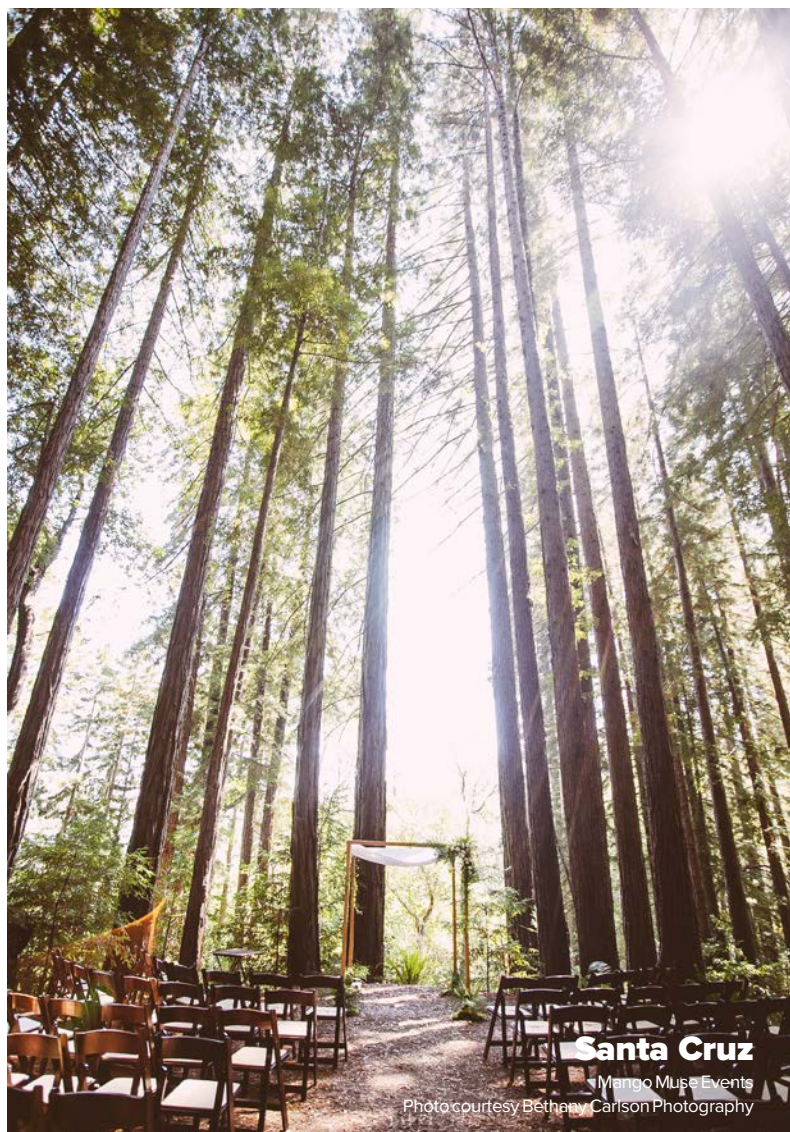
“The location is for sure part of that decision-making process,” Chang says. “It’s a little bit a function of choosing a place whose rules are something you feel comfortable with. You can look at someplace like Hawaii where you can feel safe, or a place like Idaho where they don’t require masks. It just depends on the couple.”

Flights are also a major consideration, such as whether

negative COVID-19 tests are required to board, and also the duration of flights.

“They want to make it a little easier for their guests to come,” Chang says.

In terms of venues, many couples are sticking with outdoor locations, such as beaches, mountain ranges, and even wine country.



“They want places that are naturally outdoor locations verses cities,” Chang says. “Places where it’s easy to spread out and easy to be outdoors.”

Jen Avery, VP of Marketing for Destination Weddings Travel Group says she’s seen a lot of couples opt for the larger resorts as well because of the convenience.

“Couples and their guests are now free to travel to their dream celebrations, and resort venues have protocols in place to ensure all travelers remain safe while enjoying their vacations,” she says.



San Francisco

Mango Muse Events

Photo courtesy Milouand Olin Photography

Regardless of location, destination wedding couples, like most of today's couples, must be flexible as restrictions continue to change.

"Destination wedding couples are notoriously known for being laid-back," Avery says, "but now, the 'bridechilla' mindset takes on a whole new meaning, with travel requirements and guest comfort levels changing at any point in time."

WHO TO INVITE

When opting for a destination wedding, many couples are drawn to the idea of being able to spend additional time with guests beyond the ceremony and reception. Maybe there's welcome drinks or a brunch the day after the wedding. Destination weddings offer the opportunity to create memories with those in attendance, and this has become even more important following a year of separation.

"It's always the idea of being able to spend more than just a wedding day with the ones they love, they want to experience a place and share that place and this time with people for more than five hours," Chang says. "They still want that now, maybe more than ever, because they haven't seen these people for a year, maybe longer. This is the opportunity to be together in a way that they've been denied."

Jamaica

Destination Weddings Travel Group

Photo courtesy Romanza



Croatia

Mango Muse Events

Photo courtesy Danielle Coons Photography

When talking about guests who are invited to a destination wedding in the world of COVID-19, Chang says they typically fall into two camps: those who are still a little hesitant to travel, and those who are ready to party.

"People are still very scared and will still be very scared for a long time, but you also have those guests who are like 'I'm all in and I'm ready for anything,'" she says. "They've been cooped up for so long, and the idea of going to a real wedding, dancing, eating, seeing people, and traveling on top of that, it's almost too hard to pass up—if they can do it, they're jumping with both feet in."

TOP 21 Destinations for 2021 Weddings

Courtesy Destination Wedding Planners (DWP) Congress Insider October 2020

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. United Arab Emirates | 11. Zambia |
| 2. Thailand | 12. Malta |
| 3. Indonesia | 13. Morocco |
| 4. Greece | 14. Brazil |
| 5. Italy | 15. South Africa |
| 6. France | 16. Mexico |
| 7. Bermuda | 17. Maldives |
| 8. Ibiza, Spain | 18. United States |
| 9. Turkey | 19. Portugal |
| 10. United Kingdom | 20. Australia |
| | 21. Romania |

In a regular year, destination weddings typically have a guest list of around 50 to 100, and Chang says she sees this remaining the norm long term, but in the short term that number could potentially increase.

"In the past, some guests may have thought it was selfish to have a destination wedding," Chang says, "but now the lack of travel and the lack of gathering has changed the guest perspective a little bit because there's a lot of allure there."

Avery thinks it is too difficult to anticipate how guests will feel and act as destination weddings revive.

"At this stage in the pandemic, choosing to travel is such a personal decision, so the guest mindset really wavers from timid to excited," she says.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Planning a destination wedding in the world of COVID-19 brings with it a lot of extra considerations. While couples must consider conventional wedding planning details like group flight bookings, hotel block reservations, and other logistics such as wedding ring declarations at customs (if they are traveling internationally). But on top of that, couples are having to add COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, and social distancing to the list of considerations.

This is where communication with guests becomes so important.

"Communication between couples and guests is more important now than it ever was," Avery says, "and it's always been very important!"

What COVID-19 precautions are the airlines taking? What are the testing requirements for getting to their



Riviera Maya

Destination Weddings Travel Group
Photo courtesy Shelby Monnette

destination, as well as returning home? What transportation is there from the airport? Is there testing on site at the hotel? What are the guest capacities?

"It's all those kinds of bits and pieces guests want [to know] when they're preparing to travel," Chang says. "Being able to make the safest decisions for themselves has been helpful."

One thing is for certain though, destination weddings are back.

"Weddings are so happy," Chang says. "To be able to be a part of that again and be with couples who are excited is wonderful. I'm so excited for the happy to come." ●

Join us at The Special Event + Catersource

Don't miss **Deborah Elias'** session, "**Planning a Destination Wedding A to Z**" on Wednesday, July 21 at 2:30 p.m. where she will outline the important steps to planning a destination wedding. There is also a full lineup of additional wedding-focused sessions, on both The Special Event and Catersource sides, and the All Access pass will get you into all of them. See the full agenda at schedule. thespecialeventshow.com.

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FOOD FOR FÊTES

Feasting on Fair Favorites

By Amber Kispert

Families around the country were cooped up for the past year dreaming of the fun and food featured at their favorite carnivals and festivals. This longing became even all the more torturous, certainly seen as comfort food continued to climb to the top of food trend lists.

Fortunately, events are back and so are the delicious festival foods that entice the tastebuds of so many. Earlier this spring, all of the fun of festival food was on full display when Jim Stanfill, General Manager for Las Vegas' Bear's Best golf course, teamed up with Cirque Mechanics to deliver

the first-ever Drive-N-Dine Circus, where guests dined on circus favorites while enjoying a performance from Cirque Mechanics, from the comfort and safety of parked golf carts.

"I think this project has a lot of life in it going forward because it's an intermediary step to being back to full-blown events," said Chris Lashua, Founder and Creative Director for Cirque Mechanics.

FOOD, FUN AND FAMILIES

For the event, guests purchased a ticket package which included admittance to the event, an assigned golf cart and a pre-packaged meal. For the actual performance, Cirque Mechanics produced their "Pedal Punk, A Rowdy Circus Where the Mischief is on Wheels" circus show. Some of the acts featured during the show included a contortionist, a trampoline act, a balancing act, a group acrobat act, and a comedy routine.

"We created an event that was artistically and theatrically compelling," Lashua said, "but that was safe."

Lashua said he liked the idea of golf carts, rather than a traditional drive-





The Drive-N-Dine Circus featured a contortionist, a trampoline act, a balancing act, a group acrobat and a comedy routine. Photo courtesy Mikey McNulty/McNulty Studios/Refracting Pixels LLC

Some of the acts during the Drive-N-Dine Circus performed with diabolos. Photo courtesy Mikey McNulty/McNulty Studios/Refracting Pixels LLC



Refracting Pixels LLC. The Drive-N-Dine Circus landed on golf carts because the Drive-N-Dine Circus because it allowed the audience to be seated in a theater style. Photo courtesy Mikey McNulty/McNulty Studios/Refracting Pixels LLC



FOOD FOR FÊTES



The Drive-N-Dine Circus featured a total of four public performances. Photo courtesy Mikey McNulty/McNulty Studios/Refracting Pixels LLC

-in event, because it allowed them to get away from the blacktop and instead enjoy the beautiful backdrop at Bear's Best.

"A lot of people went in the direction of the traditional drive-in, but the scale is wrong for the circus because you're so far removed from the performance," he said. "But, with the golf carts you can park them more like a theater, while still having the nostalgia of a drive-in."

Stanfill said he was beyond excited to have the golf course be part of an event like this.

"We were trying to get outside the box and think of other ways to use our space," he said. "So, it was fun to see us use our space in some way that was untraditional and wasn't golfers just hitting golf balls."

THE EATS

The food for the Drive-N-Dine Circus was provided by Jack's Place restaurant at Bear's Best and featured many circus and carnival favorites. When purchasing their event tickets, guests would select which of the food packages they wanted, and then during the event they would pick up their pre-packed meal at the "concession stand" when their parking section was dismissed.

"Before the food, we were trying to figure out how to make the event fun, unique, and safe," Stanfill said, "and

then how to enhance the experience with food."

In addition to the included package, The Midway, guests could also upgrade their meals for an additional charge.

"There are certain things that seem to go well with a circus, so we had a really fun time coming up with food packages that are of that genre," Lashua said. "But then it became how can we do the hot dog and make



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sure it's a gourmet version of it. How do we spruce that up and make it interesting?"

The event also partnered with a local winery, Michael David Winery, to serve the winery's collection of Freak Show canned wines.

Lashua and Stanfill hope to do additional events together in the future to show how events, food and golf courses can go hand-in-hand.

"We can do a beer garden, taco stands, a bicycle food delivery system, a roaming cart with hot dogs, picnic style food, or even car hop style service," Stanfill said. "We can give golfers and other event attendees something other than the traditional box lunch."

"We are so much more than just a golf course because we can do things differently." ●

The Big Top meal included a charcuterie board featuring a selection of artisan cheeses, thinly sliced cured meats, smoked salmon, gourmet olives, pickles, and pepperoncini, with fresh fruit, mustard, chutney, house-roasted and spiced nuts, and freshly baked French bread, plus chocolate chip cookies and brownies. Photo courtesy Bear's Best Las Vegas

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Corporate

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

Photo Credit: Catering Creations



Weddings

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

Photo Credit: Bonura Hospitality Group



Social

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

Photo Credit: Catering by Michael's



Nonprofits

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

Photo Credit: G Catering

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Photo Credit: The Classic Catering People

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Here Come the Newbies:

Preparing for the Event Pro Blitz



By Christie Osborne

As we make our way toward recovery from the pandemic, there is no doubt that the industry will look notably different on the other side. Event businesses have changed, client demands have changed, and the market's landscape has changed. To survive and thrive in this next stage, event professionals will need to remain agile and adaptable to the inevitable shifts on the way.

Perhaps most notably, we are expecting an influx of new event professionals who spent their time in lockdown exploring industry trends and building the foundations of soon-to-be competitors for established businesses.

For the veteran event pros among us, this might seem like a blip on the radar. After all, you have years of experience that sets you apart from the novices entering the market.

Yet, let's not forget that we are also facing economic uncertainties. In a tentative market, people start thinking more about price. They want to spend as little as possible to keep their coffers safe. If the new-to-market event pros are offering bottom-of-the-barrel rates, you might face steep competition—even if the quality of your products and services far surpass that of the newbies.

How can established industry pros communicate their value and rise above the incoming wave of new event businesses? The key is to remain relevant. Here are a few ways to stay in the conversation while securing your role as a go-to resource.

REVISIT YOUR ICA IN A POST-PANDEMIC CONTEXT

The way couples envision their wedding today is in stark contrast with what they wanted before the pandemic. Their needs have been modified and it's your responsibility to learn, understand, and meet their expectations. Health and safety is now a top priority, so you need to acquaint yourself with your local and state protocols. Most newbies will not have this knowledge, and positioning yourself as the one who cares most about guest and client safety will set you apart.

Additionally, couples are more educated about liability and contracts after a year-plus of postponed and cancelled events. They now understand force majeure and will have more questions upfront, so you must be prepared to assuage their concerns.

INFUSE YOUR MESSAGING WITH STORYTELLING

When people are bombarded with "BUY NOW!" messaging, they tend to keep scrolling. Storytelling, on the other hand, serves the same purpose of communicating your value while packaging it in a compelling narrative that presents your brand as an expert resource.

Many newbies will take to social media to share gorgeous photos from styled shoots with fluffy captions. Take a different route and provide real help. Tell stories about the challenges you've faced, how you overcame them, and the transformations your clients have experienced as a result of working

New-to-market vendors might seem young and fresh with an eye for great social media and web design, **but when you are evaluated against these newbies (because you will be!),** make sure your story comes through and the substance of your experience is crystal clear.



with you. Give them mini case studies that validate your care for clients. Demonstrating your skill and expertise goes much further than simply stating that you're experienced in the field.

CATCH UP TO SPEED WITH TECHNOLOGY

"Businesses who don't embrace technology will slowly fade away," confirms Nora Sheils, co-founder of Rock Paper Coin. "Many event professionals, especially those that have been at it quite a while, are reluctant to change. However, it's these same pros that are losing business for refusing to change and adapt to what couples need today."

Sheils elaborates: "COVID has really brought to light the need to embrace tech, and most couples today are Gen Y and Gen Z who expect instant gratification and a streamlined process. Tech and streamlined processes are at the heart of how a company can be successful as the industry continues to shift!"

FOCUS ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

"The very best thing that pros can do is leverage their portfolio and expertise, both of which are not things that newer brands will have in their back pocket," explains Meghan Ely, principal of OFD Consulting. "No matter the time of year, commit to a block of time

weekly that is dedicated to your public relations efforts."

Ely adds: "Embrace the mindset that you know more than you may even realize, and use it to your advantage by signing up for free query programs such as Help a Reporter Out (HARO), which connects you with journalists who are in need of experts in their field."

LEAN INTO YOUR EXPERIENCE

Remember: New event pros might have rock-bottom pricing, but they do not have your expertise. COVID brought new trends to the industry and you are in prime position to leverage your experience. You know your way around an outdoor event, challenges and all, but someone who has maybe thrown together a birthday party or two? They'll likely be caught off-guard by the many challenges of planning an event in a backyard or open field.

The same goes for other pandemic-inspired trends, like elopements and intimate weddings. Established pros understand that small doesn't necessarily mean cheap, and know precisely how to ramp up the luxury for micro-celebrations. Highlight your expertise through storytelling and you will effectively rise above the noise, safeguarding your reputation as a trusted professional.

New-to-market vendors might seem young and fresh with an eye for great social media and web design, but when

you are evaluated against these newbies (because you will be!), make sure your story comes through and the substance of your experience is crystal clear. By communicating your value in relatable terms, you will avoid getting into price wars and stay busy all season long. ●

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

See Christie Osborne at Catersource + The Special Event

Christie Osborne will be delivering a whopping five sessions this July, and by purchasing an All Access Pass you can attend them all!

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THE LAST WORD



Editor's note: Kate Patay, CPCE is the **2021 SEARCH Executive Committee chairwoman** and has been a champion for this charitable endeavor for many years. Along with 20 other executive committee/board of director members—many of whom will be present at Catersource + The Special Event as speakers or attendees—I encourage you to purchase a ticket to the annual signature event and support caterers and event pros in need. —Kathleen

See Kate Patay at Catersource + The Special Event

Kate Patay will be presenting on leadership and communication during The Special Event, as well as a Candid Conversation session on Wednesday, July 21 at 1:00 p.m.

Learn more at [schedule.thespecialeventshow.com](https://thespecialeventshow.com)

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(re)Connecting for a Cause

By Kate Patay

As we prepare for one of our first major industry events face-to-face in Miami Beach, there is a sense of cathartic anticipation in the planning process. The last event many of us attended was Catersource + The Special Event in Las Vegas in 2020, and the return of the show marks a first for a good majority of the audience. To me, this is a celebratory time; a time of healing and progress. It is a time to reconnect with our friends and colleagues while idea sharing, and having the meaningful conversations that help to move us forward toward recovery. We are smart, we are resilient, and we are creative. Now is the time to show how the creative minds of our industry will help bring us back together safely.

Today, I pen this to you following a committee meeting to discuss how to bring a meaningful event to you in Miami that helps an incredible cause near and dear to the hearts of many readers and attendees: **The SEARCH Foundation.**

For those who may not be familiar, SEARCH is an acronym for Special Events Assistance, Relief & Crisis Help. We are a 501c3 which directly funds individuals in catering, meetings, hospitality and live events that are faced with a catastrophic illness or loss. When someone hears the dreaded words “it’s cancer,” or has been in an accident, loses their home in a flood or wildfire... SEARCH is there to help. SEARCH was started by industry pros for industry pros and to date we have funded 100% of qualified cases, all thanks to the

generosity of our amazing industry.

As you peruse the schedule of all-star speakers, Showcasing Events and exciting new exhibitors, make sure you add Wednesday, July 21 at 9:30 p.m. to your calendar. The SEARCH Foundation will be hosting its Annual Signature Event in the heart of the Miami Design District at the uber chic Paradise Plaza. Known for being “the” event to attend in order to rub elbows



with the who’s who of the industry, this year’s Late Nite Chill vibe will ensure you don’t want to miss this party.

Experience a true Miami celebration as we raise funds for colleagues in crisis. Supporters of our flagship donor program, the SEARCH100, will have an exclusive VIP Pre-Party as a thank you for their continued support. If you’d like to learn more about the Foundation and how to support it, please visit SEARCHfoundation.org or email me directly at kate@katepatay.com. Tickets can be purchased with your Catersource + The Special Event pass or on the [SEARCH website](https://SEARCHfoundation.org). I look forward to welcoming you in Miami! ●