

FALL 2022

catersource®



FESTIVE FLAVORS FOR THE FALL



Happiness on the Menu {12}

Catering on the Go, Part 1: Catering at Sea {16}

Sustainable Seafood Catches On {32}

EDUCATION, NEWS, PRODUCTS & IDEAS FOR PROFESSIONAL CATERERS

Digital Edition Copyright Notice

The content contained in this digital edition ("Digital Material"), as well as its selection and arrangement, is owned by Informa, and its affiliated companies, licensors, and suppliers, and is protected by their respective copyright, trademark and other proprietary rights.

Upon payment of the subscription price, if applicable, you are hereby authorized to view, download, copy, and print Digital Material solely for your own personal, non-commercial use, provided that by doing any of the foregoing, you acknowledge that (i) you do not and will not acquire any ownership rights of any kind in the Digital Material or any portion thereof, (ii) you must preserve all copyright and other proprietary notices included in any downloaded Digital Material, and (iii) you must comply in all respects with the use restrictions set forth below and in the Informa Privacy Policy and the Informa Terms of Use (the "Use Restrictions"), each of which is hereby incorporated by reference. Any use not in accordance with, and any failure to comply fully with, the Use Restrictions is expressly prohibited by law, and may result in severe civil and criminal penalties. Violators will be prosecuted to the maximum possible extent.

You may not modify, publish, license, transmit (including by way of email, facsimile or other electronic means), transfer, sell, reproduce (including by copying or posting on any network computer), create derivative works from, display, store, or in any way exploit, broadcast, disseminate or distribute, in any format or media of any kind, any of the Digital Material, in whole or in part, without the express prior written consent of Informa. To request content for commercial use or Informa's approval of any other restricted activity described above, please contact the Reprints Department at (877) 652-5295. Without in any way limiting the foregoing, you may not use spiders, robots, data mining techniques or other automated techniques to catalog, download or otherwise reproduce, store or distribute any Digital Material.

NEITHER Informa NOR ANY THIRD PARTY CONTENT PROVIDER OR THEIR AGENTS SHALL BE LIABLE FOR ANY ACT, DIRECT OR INDIRECT, INCIDENTAL, SPECIAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES ARISING OUT OF THE USE OF OR ACCESS TO ANY DIGITAL MATERIAL, AND/OR ANY INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN.



Equipment Contracting

We strategically execute our projects from start to finish with fully coordinated teams including pre-construction, project management, field staff, and post constructions specialists.



Design Services

We capture your vision and provide detailed solutions, including 3D and VR renderings, to ensure timely, problem-free, and on-budget execution.



Turnkey Construction

From concept to opening, our Turnkey team works with you every step of the way to provide a streamlined, single-contact experience that is unrivaled.



PRO Marketplace

400,000+ products available at the click of a button. A high-level online customer experience for all your supply needs.



SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE FOR THE SOPHISTICATED OPERATION

#1
**FOODSERVICE
EQUIPMENT
DEALER**

FE&S MAGAZINE, APRIL 2022



400,00+
items available.

\$430M
inventory on hand.



6.7M
square feet of
warehouse space.

81%
of items ship from
stock.



99.5%
of U.S. within 1-2
day shipping.

99.75%
shipping
accuracy.



FALL 2022
VOLUME 20, NUMBER 3



features

16... SETTING SAIL

Part 1 in our Catering "On the Go" series looking at how to cater in unique environments that are constantly on the move. First up: catering at sea

32... A NEW WAVE OF SEAFOOD

Part 2 in our sustainable seafood series: menu development & recipe inspiration



Behind the Cover

This month's cover cocktail certainly has an intriguing appearance! "Corn Identity" is a unique concoction featuring bourbon, sweet corn brown sugar syrup, cornhusk tea, and salted cacao bitters. Turn to page 56 for the full recipe. Photo and recipe courtesy ©Cocktail.Vision2022

departments

04... FOREWORD

How do you reward?

08... CONFERENCE NEWS

Get the latest information on Catersource Conference & Tradeshow 2023

12... EVENT SOLUTIONS

The Le Bon Appetit fundraising event demonstrates the true meaning of happiness

26... IN THE GLASS

The fall spirit

30... SUCCESSFUL SELLING

Selling missteps you don't know you are making

42... THE C-SUITE

Recession-proofing your business

44... ICA'S THE DISH

In a world of staffing shortages & burnout, how do you keep your team engaged & happy?

46... ON THE MENU

Soups and stews are an exceptional winter warmup on cold evenings

54... FROM THE CONSULTANTS

The healthy kitchen

58... STEAL THIS

A simple balancing act

62... AS SEEN IN...

Memphis

64... THE DIGESTIF

Bob Pacanovsky discusses the value of exceptional service



How Do You Reward?

THE FIRST TIME I was called an unsung hero, I literally didn't know what it meant. I was 17 years old and one of many actors on a high school stage. Certainly not the lead, not by any stretch. Yet, I was called out by name in a review as an "unsung hero" of the production. I had to look it up. Unsung hero. *Someone who has provided a great benefit or has done great work but did not receive the credit or*

recognition they deserve. It really gave me pause, and it sort of became the soundtrack of my career. But I think everyone feels that way at times.

People like to be recognized; studies have certainly shown that to be true. Money, job flexibility, experiences, even to just be heard or seen. I think we are all struggling with ways to show our appreciation for those employees who fly under the radar, who we rely on to always do their best, who we trust will not disappoint us...and then we inevitably let them down when we don't remember to thank them properly. Same goes for us managers. It's not any different. We aren't always thanked for being good supervisors or good whatever.

I received a call from a 2022 speaker a few weeks ago, disappointed with the (non)coverage they received in this magazine re: the material they had presented at the show. All that coverage we wrote up and not a whisper about or photo of them. They'd put a lot of effort into their presentation, and they had not received public recognition for it. It made me feel terrible that they felt that way, all the while knowing that attendees of their session had benefitted immensely and were grateful for the enhanced knowledge.

When I fill the session slots at Catersource + The Special Event, you could look at it as if I am casting any stage play or musical, be it my keynotes (the leads), featured speakers (their co-stars), and finally the breakout speakers (supporting cast). Clearly, the keynotes get a lot of attention in a post-show write up, as do the featured speakers. But it's those supporting cast members that often get overlooked. Why? Supporting players will make or break any show, any event, any—anything! Think about a great Broadway musical, where the leading lady is being held aloft sideways by a dozen pair of hands. Supporting. Being uplifted as she sings that showstopper. Without the supporting cast holding her up there, she's just a pile of sequins on the floor.

More effort, beyond a bi-weekly paycheck, needs to be made toward acknowledging the efforts of all our cast members, no matter the part they play in your show or the proximity they are to a home office.

I'd like to turn your attention to page 6, where we thank our contributing writers and also where we list the names of everyone who worked on this issue. As for our 2022 Catersource + The Special Event breakout, featured, and keynote speakers, please turn to page 57. I wish I could do more to recognize you all; but I promise I'll try harder in 2023. Finally, thank you for reading this issue. It's always a pleasure to write for you.

Kathleen Stoehr
Director of Community & Content Strategy



Save the Dates!

catersource® + **THE
SPECIAL
EVENT®**

MARCH 27-30, 2023

ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER • ORLANDO, FL

OR
LAN
DO

conference.catersource.com
thespecialeventshow.com

Fall 2022

CONTRIBUTORS



Executive **Anthony Lambatos** looks at the effects of an anticipated recession.



Sales expert **Meryl Snow** identifies the selling missteps you may not know you are making.



Catering consultant **Bob Pacanovsky** discusses the lost art of service.



Chef Peter McCaffrey sheds light on mental health in the kitchen.

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

catersource®

MAGAZINE, CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW

WEBSITES

catersource.com | conference.catersource.com | leadingcaterersamerica.com

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

www.conference.catersource.com

MAIN OFFICE

605 Third Avenue, 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10158

EDITORIAL & PHOTO SUBMISSIONS

kathleen.stoehr@informa.com

amber.kispert@informa.com

amanda.nicklaus@informa.com

Director of Community &

Content Strategy Kathleen Stoehr, kathleen.stoehr@informa.com

Content Producer Amber Kispert, amber.kispert@informa.com

Content Editor Amanda Nicklaus, amanda.nicklaus@informa.com

Art Director Sharon Carlson, sharon.carlson@informa.com

Managing Director Melissa Fromento, melissa.fromento@informa.com

Group Show Director Tara Melingonis, tara.melingonis@informa.com

Ad Operations Specialist Denise Walde, denise.walde@informa.com

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Chief Executive Officer Stephen Carter

SVP, Managing Director Aharon Shamash

Vice President, Marketing Alyssa Amatulli

CONTRIBUTORS

International Caterers Association, Anthony Lambatos, Bob Pacanovsky, Chef Peter McCaffrey, and Meryl Snow



Catersource is published quarterly by Informa Connect and Catersource LLC, 650 Third Ave, 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10158. Subscriptions: Go to catersource.com and sign up to receive Catersource's quarterly issues and/or monthly e-newsletter products. Address your letters to Catersource at 650 Third Ave, 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10158. Reproduction in whole or part without written permission prohibited. ©2022 Catersource. All rights reserved.

The premier awards recognizing
the finest work in catering &
special events worldwide

catersource® + THE SPECIAL
EVENT®

ACE & Gala

A W A R D S

Start working on your entries today!
Deadline: November 30, 2022



The ACE and Gala Awards will be presented
during Catersource + The Special Event,
March 27-30 in Orlando, Florida.

Find all the details at
ace-gala.awardsplatform.com

catersource®

SPECIAL
EVENTS

SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN
SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK
SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATER
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING
THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVEN
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. TH
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY BEST V
& SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATER
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING
THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL E
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EV
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVEN
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
BEST WORK IN CATERING &
THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WOF
SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN C
EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPE
VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EV
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WO
SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN C
EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & SP
VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL E
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST
& SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK I
SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATER
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERIN
EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & S
THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPEC
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVEN
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. TH
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST V
& SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK
SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CAT
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERI
EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & S
THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & S
THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPEC
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EV
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EV
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VE
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VE
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. TH
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECI
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VER
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CAT
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VER
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CAT
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CAT
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CAT
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V

by Kathleen Stoehr



Conference updates

Catering & events industries converge in Orlando for the Florida Sunshine Tour!

The last week of March 2023 in Orlando, Fla. will be a hot one when Catersource + The Special Event's Florida Sunshine Tour lands starting on March 26th with opening day of the Art of Catering Food. With so much happening in one place for one week, it was absolutely appropriate to give this industry gathering—this industry week!—a beautiful sunshiny theme. So, what's happening and who will be there? *Here's a look:*



Sunday & Monday, March 26 & 27:

Art of Catering Food (AOCF) is back! Produced in conjunction with the International Caterers Association, AOCF will bring exclusive culinary training, trends,

catersource® + THE SPECIAL EVENT®

MARCH 27-30, 2023

ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER • ORLANDO, FL

ingredients, and techniques taught by successful chefs throughout the catering industry. Tastings, tours, round robins, and lunch and learns are a big part of this two-day event.

Monday, March 27:

Leading Caterers of America will hold its full day meeting. This members-only consortium of the top catering and event companies in the U.S. and Canada will gather for a one-day intensive assemblage to exchange ideas and discuss strategies regarding how to build their businesses ever higher.

Monday, March 27:

Catersource + The Special Event “soft opens” with its Connect Live evening event, a chance for those already checked in and ready to engage to join together and kick off the week. It's a great evening, spirits are high, and the week is wide open with possibility for networking and interaction.

Tuesday, March 28:

Catersource + The Special Event opens, with a conference-only first day and an Opening Night Event.

It also welcomes its sister media brand, MeetingsNet, presenting its first-ever conference track, available to those who purchase a TSE pass. The International Live Events Association (ILEA) will also offer a track for those looking for CSEP certification.

Be sure to visit our new Experience rooms on the second floor, too. More on that in our winter issue.

After the conference closes for the day at 5:00 p.m., groups such as International Caterers Association

FLORIDA SUNSHINE TOUR - 2023



STARRING



catersource® + **THE SPECIAL EVENT®**

MARCH 27-30 • ORLANDO, FL



FEATURING



the **ART** of
CATERING **FOOD**

MARCH 26 & 27 • ORLANDO, FL



WITH SPECIAL
GUESTS

MEETINGSNET

LCA
LEADING CATERERS
OF AMERICA

ACE & GRALA
AWARDS

ICA



SEARCH
FOUNDATION

ILEA
INTERNATIONAL
LIVE EVENTS ASSOCIATION

TICKETS

Catersource-TSE.com



Brought to you by
informaconnect

Educational Foundation (ICAEF) will celebrate its scholarship recipients in a private gathering; various exhibitors will host invitation-only events; and then the evening will culminate in the Opening Night Event, produced by event chairs Selina Mullenax, CORT & Gabby Mourino, Imprint Group.

Wednesday, March 29:

An Opening General Session launches a full day of activity on the exhibit hall floor (open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) including conference sessions on the Ignite and Keynote stages. There will, as always, be hundreds of exhibitors to visit, experience, and learn from.

In the afternoon, additional sessions in conference rooms begin at 1:00 p.m. and end at 5:00 p.m. The annual DICED competition (starting at 1:00 p.m. on the Culinary Main Stage) will bring chefs together for a fun-loving but highly competitive contest. Pitting

six chefs against the clock (and each other) to create a winning creation, three judges will decide who will take home the \$1,500 prize and the 2023 DICED champion trophy.

Later in the evening the annual Special Event Assistance, Relief & Crisis Help (SEARCH) Foundation fundraiser will bring like-minded people together to raise money through auction for those in need. A spectacular charitable event, Catersource is a proud donor and hopes to see you there!

Thursday, March 30:

Always known to go big on its last day, Catersource + The Special Event will offer a 9:00 a.m. Closing General Session that will inspire you, another full day of exhibit hall browsing and buying (10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.), the fabulous Leadership Lunch at the incredible Dr. Phillips Center celebrating the movers and shakers of the catering and events industry (11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.), a cocktail reception (2:00 p.m.

to 3:00 p.m.), more conference education (ending at 4:00 p.m.), and then the big KABOOM! You'll start the night off with the "Oscars" of the catering and events industry: An elaborate awards ceremony featuring the ACE, CATIE, and Gala awards with pre-show cocktail reception and exciting awards presentation for work exceptionally well done (see adjoining page for more information on the ACE awards).

After that, join award recipients and exhibitors, sponsors, speakers, and attendees for one last industry week hurrah as we say farewell at our Closing Night Event, chaired by the ever-delightful Chef Boris Seymore of BDS Catering & Productions.

All of the other good stuff

REGISTRATION: Registration opens September 26! Super Early Bird rates are in effect until January 06, 2023. Take advantage of the lowest prices available and enjoy exclusive access to webinars, virtual events, networking meetups, award nominee and session sneak peeks, and other exciting show-related nibbles that only registered attendees can receive. If you want the inside scoop before the show so you arrive in the know, head over to <http://catersource-tse.com> to review pricing packages.

CALL FOR SPEAKERS: Our call for session speakers is closed and the full educational schedule will launch after the new year, but we will begin to tease out sessions beginning in November 2022. Right now, go to schedule.catersource.com to view evening event information and a few of our premier sessions. We are excited to be able to bring you the best and brightest in live education!



THE ANNUAL DICED COMPETITION WILL PIT SIX CHEFS AGAINST EACH OTHER (AND THE CLOCK) TO CREATE A WINNING CREATION. PICTURED: CONNER BLACK (FOOTERS CATERING). PHOTO COURTESY WASIO PHOTOGRAPHY

NORM BENNETT HAPPILY
ACCEPTED 24 CARROTS
CATERING & EVENTS' ACE
AWARD FOR BEST OFF-
PREMISE CATERING FOR
THEIR EVENT "FANDANGO
ALTA CALIFORNIA."
PHOTO COURTESY WASIO
PHOTOGRAPHY



INSTAWORK COULD BE SEEN
SHOWING OFF THEIR ACE
AWARD ON THE TRADESHOW
FLOOR FOLLOWING THEIR
WIN FOR BEST INNOVATION.
PHOTO COURTESY WASIO
PHOTOGRAPHY



ACE

Achievement in Catered Events

And the Award Goes To...

It's once again time to celebrate the best of the best! Nominations are now being accepted for the Catersource 2023 Achievement in Catered Events awards (ACE)! We invite you to submit your best work from the past year. Join in the excitement and the spirit of our industry as we celebrate the hard work and exceptional accomplishments of our peers.

This year's ACE awards, beginning at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 30 will be like no other since you can now enter brand new categories! *This year's new categories include:*

National Caterer of the Year This award is presented to the company, whose catering business is exceptional in all aspects, including business proficiency and culinary expertise. Catered events of any size or type executed within the United States of America will be considered, either executed in a venue or area owned by an entity other than the catering company, or on the catering company's own property.

International Caterer of the Year This award is presented to the company

whose catering business is exceptional in all aspects, including business proficiency and culinary expertise. Catered events of any size or type executed outside of the United States of America will be considered, either executed in a venue or area owned by an entity other than the catering company, or on the catering company's own property.

Catered Social Event of the Year The caterer should be responsible for the original menu concept, design, and management of catering production. Social events can include, but are not limited to, birthday parties, anniversaries, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, etc.

Catered Fundraising Event of the Year The caterer should be responsible for the original menu concept, design, and management of catering production. The event must be for a nonprofit organization and serve as a fundraiser.

Catered Wedding of the Year The best catered wedding is defined as a wedding that stands out as extraordinary and innovative. The caterer should be responsible for the original menu concept, design, and management of catering production.

Catered Micro Event of the Year A micro event is defined as a catered event for 50 guests or fewer, that stands out

as extraordinary and innovative. The caterer should be responsible for the original menu concept, design, and management of catering production.

Product or Technological Innovation of the Year Celebrating technological or product innovation that has helped solve a problem for the catering and events industry. Examples could include, but are not limited to, new sanitary and hygienic products, unique packaging, time-saving products, and software.

Sustainability in Catering Events must place a keen eye on sustainability (i.e., zero waste, diversity, equity and inclusion, etc.). **CS**

TO SUBMIT AN ENTRY to this year's ACE awards and see the full list of categories, please visit our awards portal at <https://ace-gala.awardsplatform.com/>

IMPORTANT DATES

- Jan. 1st, 2022–Nov. 30, 2022 | Eligibility period for entries
- Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2022 | Regular submission deadline (\$99 fee)
- Thursday, Dec. 15, 2022 | Late Bird submission deadline (\$160 fee)

By Amber Kispert

THE TRUE MEANING OF

S E N E S I P P I N E S H A P I N E S



CHEF MANEET CHAUHAUN
(CHAUHAUN ALES & MASALA HOUSE,
AND CHAATABLE) SERVED HER
SIGNATURE **GOL GUPPA INDIAN
STREET FOOD** (SEMOLINA PUFFS,
BLACK GARBANZO, ROASTED
CUMIN, TAMARIND CHUTNEY, AND
MINT CILANTRO MANGO WATER)
DURING THE EVENT. PHOTO
COURTESY CATERSOURCE STAFF

For many, happiness is a hand. In the wafting air, the crunch

and vegetables, the combinations that hit your tongue—you really can't help but smile. This is the culinary with Le Bon Appetit for 'happiness' so

This summer, LEO Events up with celebrated restaurateur Chef Maneet Chauhaun (owner of Restaurants Line, Magnolia House, and Pantano) for Le Bon Appetit bi-annual fundraiser for Children's Hospital of Tennessee Health Sciences Center, one of the top facilities for neurosurgery.

Le Bon Appetit started as a small-scale culinary event for chefs from all walks of life for a cause.

"We all have talents, skills, and that's what we give back," said Chauhaun in an article in *Le Bon Appetit Promise newsletter for a Cause*.

As the event grew, it included more chefs, and LEO Events handled the logistics.

"LEO Events really brought the nuts and bolts and everything we did,"

This summer's event at the Crosstown Concourse brought together many award-winning chefs and across the country, their signature dishes.

ny, food and
ness go hand-in-
Heavenly aromas
g through the
e satisfying
n of fresh fruits
ne exciting flavor
t mingle on the
y can't help
why merging
Bonheur (French
seems only fitting.

Events teamed
Memphis
Kelly English
ant Iris, the Second
use, Fino's, and
Appetit, a
er for Le Bonheur
l, a 255-bed
as a primary
or the University of
Science Center and
ities in the country

rted in 2012 as
ary showcase of
s of life to cook

s, we all have
at we can use to
ef Kelly in a 2016
ur's *Securing the*
titled *Cooking*

English partnered
e supplied the
ents handled the

drove all the
heavy lifting of
Chef Kelly adds.

nt, held at the
urse in Memphis,
more than 30
efs from Memphis
ntry to showcase
es.

(RIGHT) CHEF PHILIP DEWAYNE (PARK + CHERRY CAFÉ) PRESENTED SCALLOP OASIS (PAN SEARED SCALLOPS, FAVA BEAN PUREE, POMEGRANATE AND PORK GASTRIQUE, AND MICRO RADISH). PHOTO COURTESY CATERSOURCE STAFF



CHEF RYAN TRIMM (SUNRISE AND 117 PRIME) PREPARED WOOD-GRILLED PORK LOIN WITH PURPLE HULL PEA SUCCOTASH, PEPPER RELISH, AND PEA TENDRILS. PHOTO COURTESY CATERSOURCE STAFF



There's so many celebrity chef events out there, but this one is different because this is a whole brotherhood."

— CINDY BREWER (LEO EVENTS)

"The great thing about the chefs who come is that we really look at who's not only doing great food," Chef Kelly says, "but also who's doing great work in their own communities."

Over the course of its five total events, Le Bon Appetit has raised more than \$3 million to help Le Bonheur Club (a philanthropic women's organization that established Le Bonheur Children's Hospital) fund specialized medical equipment, child-specific programming, and technology. The 2022 event raised \$346,000.

"We're having fun yes, but also helping to change the world," current Le Bonheur President Michael Wiggins says.

However, Le Bon Appetit is a lot more than just a culinary event. The chefs take time to serve families, tour the hospital, and even hit the kitchen at FedExFamily House (Le Bonheur's home-away-from-home for out-of-town families), where they participate in a [Chopped-style breakfast battle](#) using fun, kid-friendly ingredients like candy bars, sugary cereals, and marshmallows.

"There's so many celebrity chef events out there, but this one is different," says Cindy Brewer (LEO Events), "because this is a whole brotherhood."

Chef Kelly says he intends to continue to grow Le Bon Appetit.

"I don't think we'll ever go annual though, I think bi-annual is the right spot," he says. "The last thing we want to be is just another thing on someone's calendar. We're very aware that Memphis is not New York City, Chicago, or New Orleans, but it's so much fun to bring people in and surprise them with the talent that we have."



GEORGE BREWER (LEFT, SON OF LEO EVENTS OWNERS CINDY AND KEVIN BREWER) WAS DIAGNOSED WITH A BRAIN TUMOR WHEN HE WAS JUST 10 YEARS OLD, RESULTING IN A HOSPITAL STAY AND SURGERY AT LE BONHEUR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL. PHOTO COURTESY LEO EVENTS



HOST, CHEF KELLY ENGLISH (IN BLUE JACKET, OWNER OF RESTAURANT IRIS, THE SECOND LINE, MAGNOLIA HOUSE, FINO'S, AND PANTA) POSES FOR A PHOTO AT LE BON APPETIT 2022. CHEF KELLY IS AN AVID SUPPORTER OF LE BONHEUR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AND ONE OF LE BON APPETIT'S FOUNDERS. PHOTO COURTESY LE BONHEUR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

A FULL CIRCLE STORY

By Amber Kispert

When George Brewer (son of LEO Events' owners Cindy and Kevin Brewer) was in fifth grade, he constantly struggled with headaches. Cindy Brewer thought maybe the headaches were just related to sports and not being hydrated.

"I told him he was making a big deal about nothing and to suck it up and get over it," she says.

However, on Mother's Day of 2017, George (now 15 years old) was taken to Le Bonheur Children's Hospital (located in Memphis) at the suggestion of Brewer's sister (who was a doctor at the hospital) after he complained that his headaches had gotten worse and worse.

An MRI eventually showed that George had a small tumor (a stage 4 ganglioglioma) on the back of his head,

and doctors determined George's tumor would need to be removed. George eventually made a full recovery and now visits Le Bonheur annually for checkups.

As the event management company for Le Bon Appetit, you might say that the Brewers' experience with Le Bonheur has come full circle.

The Brewers first connected with Chef Kelly English (the longtime architect of Le Bon Appetit) shortly after his first event in 2012.

Le Bon Appetit is a very personal project for Chef Kelly, who spent two months hospitalized following a childhood fall from a second story window.

"The hospital was everything a hospital should be. It's just that it was a hospital built for adults," said Chef Kelly in a 2016 article in Le Bonheur's *Securing the Promise* newsletter titled *Cooking for a Cause*. "Hospitals

can be big, scary places for kids. The environment is so sterile. It's nothing like Le Bonheur."

Chef Kelly's hospital stay didn't include the kind of resources you find at Le Bonheur, according to the article, such as child life specialists who use toys and play for distraction during procedures. Playful hallway lights didn't illuminate when passing through, and there weren't kid-friendly, interactive works of art on every floor. There weren't machines built just for kids, so that, for example, X-rays deliver less radiation to the body, and not every doctor or nurse had received the extra training designated for the specific care of children.

"The care I got was fine, but the care you get at Le Bonheur is inspiring," Chef Kelly says. "I needed that place and didn't have it." 

CHEFS KELLY ENGLISH (RIGHT, OWNER OF RESTAURANT IRIS, THE SECOND LINE, MAGNOLIA HOUSE, FINO'S, AND PANTA) AND **ERLING JENSEN** (LEFT, ERLING JENSEN'S) SHOWING OFF THEIR LE BONHEUR SOCKS AT LE BON APPETIT, LE BONHEUR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL'S LARGEST FUNDRAISING EVENT. PHOTO COURTESY LEO EVENTS



LE BON APPETIT BROUGHT SOME OF THE NATION'S MOST CELEBRATED CHEFS TOGETHER IN MEMPHIS. PICTURED (LEFT TO RIGHT): CHEF KEITH CLINTON (BLACK SHEEP CATERING), CHEF MEREDITH CLINTON (BLACK SHEEP CATERING), CHEF DAVE KROG (DORY), AND CHEF KELLY ENGLISH. PHOTO COURTESY LEO EVENTS



CHEF BEN SMITH (TSUNAMI) PRESENTED **PICKLED SHRIMP** WITH WATERMELON, BASIL AIOLI, AND WATERMELON-MINT GASTRIQUE. PHOTO COURTESY CATERSOURCE STAFF



ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE OFFERINGS DURING LE BON APPETIT WAS **CHEF MANEET CHAUHAN'S GOL GUPPA STREET FOOD**, WHERE MANGO WATER IS POURED INTO A PUFF PASTRY CUP AND THEN THE ENTIRE DISH IS EATEN IN ONE SINGLE BITE. PHOTO COURTESY LE BONHEUR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



ANCHO GARLIC CRUSHED BEEF TENDERLOIN CARPACCIO WITH CABBAGE, APPLE, GOLDEN BEET, CUCUMBER SLAW, SHISHO, THAI BASIL, AND MS. CINDY'S VINAIGRETTE FROM **CHEF KAREN CARRIER** (THE BEAUTY SHOP, BAR DKDC, ANOTHER ROADSIDE ATTRACTION CATERING, THE MOLLIE FONTAINE LOUNGE, AND BACK DO/MI YARD). PHOTO COURTESY CATERSOURCE STAFF

Setting Sail

Part 1 of our Catering “On the Go” series
looking at how to cater in unique environments
that are constantly on the move

By Amber Kispert



SERVING HUNDREDS, EVEN thousands, of people during an event is a challenge in itself: timing everything perfectly, ensuring the plate is beautiful when it leaves the kitchen, and above all, it must be delicious. But let's make it more interesting. Let's put you into a small kitchen that is constantly—literally—moving and eliminate the opportunity to triage missing ingredients, equipment, or even vessels with a quick dash off site. Sound intimidating? Well, that is exactly the world that caterers encounter while working on cruise ships and yachts.

(TOP RIGHT) MAHOGANY BLACK COD ABOARD ROYAL CARIBBEAN. PHOTO COURTESY TIM AYLEN

(MIDDLE RIGHT) THE BIRD'S NEST (AT ROYAL CARIBBEAN'S WONDERLAND) IS A DEVILED EGG THAT HAS BEEN SMOKED AND IS SERVED WITH BLUE CHEESE AND HOT SAUCE.

(BOTTOM RIGHT) JUMBO LUMP CRAB CAKE ABOARD ROYAL CARIBBEAN. PHOTO COURTESY TIM AYLEN





“As a primarily off-premise caterer, we embrace the crazy that comes with catering on the water!” says Robin Selden with Marcia Selden Catering & Events, which has a division of its business (Maritime Club) that specializes in serving on private yachts.

LIFE ONBOARD

The first step in catering aboard a ship is recipe and menu development, which will often occur in test kitchens in port. For example, Royal Caribbean’s chefs

utilize a test kitchen in Miami where they can experiment with different recipe ideas.

“The test kitchen is crucial because we can take it from a small idea and we can recreate that small idea in a small environment—It’s much better to start things small in order to test them,” said Gary Thomas, Corporate Executive Chef for Royal Caribbean in a [Royal Caribbean promotional video](#). “This is where we play, this is where we work.”

The dishes that are developed in test kitchens are oftentimes then tried



MARCIA SELDEN CATERING & EVENTS SETS OUT A BUFFET ABOARD ONE OF THEIR MARITIME CLUB'S CLIENTS' PRIVATE YACHTS. PHOTO COURTESY MARCIA SELDEN CATERING & EVENTS



THE SOLARIUM BISTRO (ABOARD ROYAL CARIBBEAN'S SYMPHONY OF SEAS) SERVES AS A BUFFET DURING THE AFTERNOONS, BUT TRANSFORMS INTO A RESERVATION-ONLY, SPECIALTY RESTAURANT IN THE EVENING. PHOTO COURTESY SBW-PHOTO

out onboard in a ship's specialty restaurants or as a daily special. If it is a popular item, it will then be put into the regular menu rotation.

"The ultimate decision maker is our guests," said Michael Gilligan, Director of Culinary for Royal Caribbean, in the promotional video.

Okay, so the menus are set and it's time to get onboard. Load-in day for a weeklong cruise consists of pallets upon pallets of food being loaded into the ship's galleys (or kitchens) where the nearly 300-person kitchen crew will get to work creating meals for the roughly 10 restaurants and buffets onboard. Each item is carefully inspected by the culinary crew to ensure that

all perishables are of the highest quality. On average, F&B staff (including chefs) work between 10 and 12 hours a day (seven days a week) since there is usually some sort of food available 24 hours a day (even if it's just room service).

"The most unique part of working on a boat is the timing and precise planning as there is no room for error," Selden says. "You can't run out and grab something that may have been forgotten once you've left the shore."

For example, there have been plenty of instances of a vendor or supplier getting delayed and missing the ship, so it is then their responsibility to get the food on the ship, whether it's by helicopter, boat, seaplane, or at the next port of call.



(ABOVE LEFT) MARCIA SELDEN CATERING & EVENTS' STAFF IS DRESSED TO IMPRESS ABOARD ONE OF THEIR MARITIME CLUB'S CLIENTS' PRIVATE YACHTS. PHOTO COURTESY MARCIA SELDEN CATERING & EVENTS

(ABOVE RIGHT) THE HEIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY CUISINE IS REALIZED AT CHIC (ONE OF THE MAIN DINING ROOMS) ONBOARD ANTHEM OF THE SEAS. PHOTO COURTESY SBW-PHOTO



Next, it's time to train the galley staff, and many cruise lines will offer in-house training onboard for new crew members.

So, we're ready to serve now right? Almost. First, each member of the culinary team is assigned to one of



the galley stations where they work in tandem to prepare meals.

“Everybody has a specific job, and they have to know it inside and out,” says Rick Welch, longtime executive chef and president of RMW Global Consulting. “It’s this idea of divide and conquer.”

It is also important to account for the small kitchens, narrow stairwells, elevators, and hallways.

So, the menus are planned, the food is loaded, the staff is trained, and everyone has their job. All that’s left is to hit the stage.

“When you go out these doors, it’s showtime,” says Welch (who is a collaborator with Seatrade Cruise Global, which will be delivering a new conference on cruise dining called [F&B at Sea](#)). “You’re preparing to deliver a service that is legendary.”

One of the biggest undertakings on any cruise ship is the buffet, since it



(LEFT) COASTAL KITCHEN (ABOARD ROYAL CARIBBEAN) FUSES MEDITERRANEAN INFLUENCES WITH THE UNMATCHED RICHES OF CALIFORNIA’S BOUNTIFUL FARMLANDS AND FEATURES SUCH DISHES AS THE GOLDEN BEET SALAD.



(ABOVE) FRESH BAKED BREAD IS PREPARED DAILY ABOARD MOST CRUISE SHIPS.

will be set for the three traditional pockets of time: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Not surprisingly, the cruise staff is such a well-oiled machine that the flip is near seamless. “From soups to nuts, it’s only about 45 minutes to an hour-

and-a-half to flip it,” Welch says.

“We have all-hands-on-deck and we divide and conquer—it’s a symphony of chaos.”

Want to know one of the secrets to such seamless service? “There are conveyer belts everywhere and specialized delivery mechanisms,” Welch says.

“Also, checklists are king when you work on a cruise ship. Everything is such minute detail because you’re in a foreign environment when you must travel,” he says. “It’s an amazing thing what they do on board to produce what they produce.”

IN THE GALLEY

The story of each onboard meal begins with reservations and sales, where ship operators can understand the type of clientele they are expecting on each cruise. For example, a Disney Cruise Line ship may have a lot of chicken nuggets and pastas since so many of the passengers won’t have very sophisticated palettes (children). Or if there is an overabundance of British guests, for example, be ready for roast dinners and puddings for dessert. Guests from continental Europe crave more Mediterranean-style dishes that feature fresh seafood and desserts with fruit, according to the [American College of Culinary and Language Arts](#).



(LEFT) THE BABY VEGETABLES IN THE GARDEN (SERVED AT ROYAL CARIBBEAN’S WONDERLAND) COME WITH EDIBLE PEBBLES AND SOIL.



Sustainability at Sea

One would think that something such as cruise ships, with so many people onboard, would accumulate mountains of waste. However, it's just the opposite. Cruise ships incorporate myriad sustainable practices to ensure they leave the oceans as pristine as they found them.

According to *The Secret Life of the Cruise* (on [Prime Video](#)) a cruise ship can accumulate about 10 tons of garbage during a weeklong cruise; however, 80% of that can be recycled. While onboard, the crewmembers who work in the ship's garbage room meticulously sort the day's garbage by hand, after which it goes to either the incinerator to be disposed of, or to the compactor for processing. Once the ship returns to port, it can then transport plastic, aluminum, paper, and glass for recycling.

The biggest contributor to a ship's waste is obviously the food. Fortunately, cruise operators have become so precise with their food ordering that there is very little leftover food at the end of the cruise, which means the majority of the food waste comes from what's left on passengers' plates. On average, there is about 1.5 tons of food waste every day aboard a cruise ship, which equates to enough food to feed another 500 passengers, according to *The Secret Life of the Cruise*.

As a way to sustainably deal with the waste, the leftover food is pulverized and puréed and held in

large holding tanks until it can be discarded in open sea, where it can serve as fish food.

Another alternative that many cruise ships are utilizing is an onboard "food cycler" where organic food waste can be transformed into high-grade soil or fertilizer, according to [Cruise Deals Expert](#).

Another initiative that has generated some buzz among the cruise industry is Viking Cruise Line's conversion of food waste into biogas. Through a partnership with Enviro Group, the ship's biowaste is collected at port in Helsinki and is then transported for processing. Enviro then transforms the waste through a biogas purification process, which results in biogas that is suitable for vehicles. According to Viking Cruise Line's [2020 Sustainability Report](#), Viking brought a total of 470 tons of food waste ashore from Viking XPRS, Viking Grace, and Mariella for biogas production. This yielded 35,230 cubic meters of biogas, equivalent to 39,800 liters of petrol.

The chefs themselves also play a pivotal role in reducing food waste by adjusting their menus accordingly. For example, if produce is ripening faster than expected, they try to work it into another meal, such as overripe broccoli going into broccoli cheddar soup instead of being tossed.



“In the main dining room there are dishes you cannot get rid of (like French onion soup or escargot),” said Gilligan. “But we want to try and do those old classics, just with a little twist.”

Since cruise ships sail from ports all around the world, and attract people from all nationalities, dining menus will have to accommodate all different types of appetites and tastes. However, a simple rule of thumb is fresh, delicious, and authentic cuisine.

“To come up with new menu items for the main dining room is a collaboration, it is an amalgamation of all of those great ideas coming together,” Gilligan said.

On Royal Caribbean’s Ovation of the Seas, some of the menu options include: slow-roasted prime rib (tender beef with potato croquette, broccoli, and horseradish au jus), baked polenta and feta cheese (creamy corn polenta, feta cheese, crispy grilled vegetables, olive oil, and balsamic vinaigrette), pumpkin soup (silky pumpkin soup, sour cream, toasted pumpkin seeds, and crispy bacon), duck l’orange (roasted marinated duck legs, with croquette potato, braised red cabbage, and orange Cointreau sauce), and Moroccan-spiced ahi tuna (grilled tuna steak served over mint couscous, sauteed spinach and tequila peppers, topped with yogurt vinaigrette).

For Marcia Selden Catering & Events, their at-sea menus rely on simple dishes.

Cruise Catering by the Numbers

Two of the world’s largest cruise ships (MSC Seaside and Royal Caribbean’s Symphony of the Seas) both can accommodate 6,000 passengers on average for a weeklong cruise. Here’s a numerical breakdown of what to expect from the ships’ food and beverage teams:

- 30,000 meals served per day (11 million meals served per year)
- 1,000 food and beverage crewmembers per cruise working 10- to 12-hour shifts
- 280 chefs per cruise
- 600,000 pounds of food and drinks per weeklong cruise (30 trucks carrying 500 pallets worth of inventory)
- 1,500 people served each night per dining room
- 14,000 plates of food served over a four-hour period
- \$1 million shopping budget per week
- 20 storerooms
- 6 freezers
- 36 kitchens
- 11 bars
- 12 restaurants
- 15 tons of meat served per week
 - 1,500 pounds of shrimp per night
 - 15,000 pounds of beef per week
 - 9,700 pounds of chicken per week
 - 2,100 pounds of lobster tails per week
- 170,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables per week
- 20,000 eggs per day
- 600 pounds of butter per day
- 300 liters of tomato sauce per day
- 700 pounds of ice cream per week
- 2,000 bottles of spirits per week
- 8,000 bottles of wine per week
- 10,000 liters of beer per week
- 60,000 napkins used per day
- 10 tons of garbage per day
 - 2,000 empty cans per day
 - 3,000 glass bottles per day
 - 1.5 tons of leftover food each day
- 24 hours per day

The information here is gathered from:

The Secret Life of the Cruise, Prime Video

How 30,000 Meals a Day Are Made on the World’s Largest Cruise Ship, Business Insider



CHEFS WHO WORK ABOARD ROYAL CARIBBEAN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIMENT WITH NEW FLAVORS AND PRESENTATIONS IN ORDER TO WOW GUESTS. PHOTO COURTESY SIMON BROOKE-WEBB



JAMIE'S ITALIAN BY CHEF JAMIE OLIVER FEATURES SUCH FAVORITES AS HIS FAMOUS LAMB.



MILK CHOCOLATE CREMOSO ABOARD ROYAL CARIBBEAN. PHOTO COURTESY TIM AYLEN

"You need to plan menus that are easy to manage in very tiny quarters," she says. "The galley on most yachts is the size of a closet with limited counterspace and small refrigerators. We make sure that even the way we pack the food to get on board is important. It needs to be done as compactly and organized as possible as there isn't typically even storage for the Cambros, boxes, hand trucks, etc. that you would typically use to load your food and equipment for an off-premise event."

Many cruise ships will also utilize "secret menus" that guests can order from (if they're in the know). Oftentimes, galley chefs will produce globally inspired dishes for the ship's crew (since so many are international) so that they can feel at home. Many of the chefs are also

international themselves, so this allows them to highlight their own specialties that may never appear on the printed dining room menus. Some of the secret menu items often found on cruise ships include curry and other traditional Indian dishes, adobo, jerk chicken, fried rice, kosher items, Italian, and in many cases their own family recipes.

ROW THE BOAT

One of the most unique things about working on a cruise ship or yacht is the unpredictability. "The ship is rocking and at any moment if somebody didn't put the break on a trolley, you're going to see that trolley flying away," said Allan Gentile, Development Chef of Culinary Innovation & Operation, in [How 30,000 Meals a Day Are Made on](#)

[the World's Largest Cruise Ship, a Business Insider video](#). "It happens."

However, today's ships are built with stabilizers underneath to help safeguard against unruly seas. Additionally, most cruise lines will have a meteorologist on staff who can advise captains to head into port in case the seas really get out of control.

However, it is important to make sure that everyone on staff has their sea legs. "We always get anti-nausea bracelets for our team to wear at events," Selden says. "If you've been on a boat, sea sickness can hit and that is no fun when you are having to work!"

So, what happens if you run out of an ingredient mid-cruise? Well, there is always the option to pick up items in the next port of call, but most

often it's on the chef to be creative.

"When you're talking about culinarians, the mind of a culinarian is almost James Bond-ish," Welch says, "you always have to have plan A, B, C, D, E, and F."

How about if there is a power outage onboard? All freezers and refrigerators have backup battery-powered generators to safeguard against spoiled food.

One of the most recent situations was several years ago when a Carnival Cruise Line ship encountered engine trouble and was stranded at sea far beyond their food reserves. The solution? A helicopter delivered fresh food to restock the galleys (most cruise ships are equipped with helipads).

"These things happen and for the most part guests understand," Welch



(BELOW LEFT) THE WINDJAMMER SERVES AS THE MAIN BUFFET ABOARD ROYAL CARIBBEAN SHIPS AND FEATURES INTERNATIONAL DISHES INCLUDING SCRAMBLED EGG BHURJI SERVED WITH ROTI, HOME-STYLE CRISPY CHICKEN AND WAFFLES, WATERMELON AND FETA SALAD, TRADITIONAL CHICKEN MARSALA, SAVORY PORK VINDALOO, TANGY DUCK A L'ORANGE, AND FLAVORFUL CARIBBEAN GOAT CURRY. SOME DAYS, THE WINDJAMMER WILL HAVE A THEMED MENU.

(BELOW RIGHT) JAMIE'S ITALIAN BY CHEF JAMIE OLIVER (ABOARD ROYAL CARIBBEAN) FEATURES RUSTIC ITALIAN FAVORITES, HANDMADE TO CREATE AMAZING FLAVOR COMBINATIONS SUCH AS HIS SARDINE BRUSCHETTA.

says. "You try to prepare the best you can, but you cannot prepare for everything."

TRENDS AHOY

Just like any other area of catering, trends often play a key part in dining onboard. For example, Royal Caribbean has fully embraced the plant-based movement by having a vegan menu option as part of their main dining menu. Virgin Cruises has embraced the trend so full-heartedly that they not only have plant-based items on their main dining menus, but they also have a vegan-specialized restaurant (Razzle Dazzle) that serves such options as mushroom tartare and banana blossom "fish" and chips.

Another popular trend in cruise dining is the celebration of regional dishes and local ingredients. On a recent Alaskan cruise on Royal





Caribbean's Ovation of the Seas, the final evening's meal featured a special Canadian menu (as the port that day was Victoria, B.C.) featuring fresh Canadian sockeye salmon with a maple drizzle, and a maple soufflé with bourbon caramel for dessert.

Experiential dining is also becoming increasingly popular aboard cruise ships. One of the most famous is Wonderland, an *Alice in Wonderland* themed restaurant aboard many of Royal Caribbean's ships where "chefs twist their culinary kaleidoscopes to invent an elaborate dreamscape of never-before-seen fare" such as: "liquid lobster," "liquid risotto," a side of vegetables served in a garden of edible dirt, a dessert that implodes before your very eyes, and a cosmopolitan that is poured

over raspberry cotton candy.

Lastly, celebrity chef partnerships have almost become the norm on cruise ships with such restaurants as The Grill by Thomas Keller (Seabourn Cruises), Asian Market Kitchen by Roy Yamaguchi (MSC Cruises), Jamie's Italian by Jamie Oliver (Royal Caribbean), and Guy's Burger Joint by Guy Fieri (Carnival Cruise Lines).

So, are you cut out for life out at sea? Chef Peter Howell (Executive Chef for Royal Caribbean's Mariner of the Seas) shares his advice:

"It's a great job and I've never left it. I've thoroughly enjoyed it and it's been a passion," he said during an [interview with travel vlogger Alanna Zingano](#). "You need to seriously look at what's involved, but essentially you

(ABOVE) CRUISE LINES COMMONLY PARTNER WITH CELEBRITY CHEFS FOR ONBOARD SPECIALTY RESTAURANTS. JAMIE'S ITALIAN BY JAMIE OLIVER (ABOARD MOST ROYAL CARIBBEAN SHIPS) FEATURES HANDMADE RUSTIC ITALIAN FAVORITES USING SEASONAL INGREDIENTS AND JAMIE'S TRIED-AND-TRUE RECIPES.

get to work with others while having fun. You learn very quickly that it's far different than a lot of other jobs. It's hard work, so you have to be prepared to do that. But it does have great rewards."

Welch agrees. "It's not an easy thing, and it's never the same thing twice," but it's fun as all get out," he says. "But you have to jump in with both feet, you can't just dabble a toe."

Editor's note: Seatrade Cruise Global is owned and operated by Informa, Catersource's parent company. 



By Amber Kispert

The Fall Spirit

Autumn is a truly special time of year. Besides the crisp air and colorful foliage, fall also ushers in a plethora of amazing flavors.

While pumpkin might be the flavor most synonymous with fall, plenty of other fruits and vegetables (squash, pears, and apples) flourish. Beyond fruits and vegetables, the fall also embraces such “cozy” flavor combinations as cinnamon, chai, maple, ginger, butterscotch, bourbon, and salted caramel. With cocktails, smoke also makes a major play.

“Autumn carves out its very own design aesthetic and flavor profile inspired by the literal turning of the season, coinciding with our own change of mood, holidays, and cuisine,” says Yelena Anter (Cocktail Vision). “Fall is the season for rich, earthy, vibrant, savory, sophisticated cocktails shared amongst friends and family.”

Get your customers into the fall spirit with these flavor-forward cocktails. Cheers! **CS**

BURNT CINNAMON CARAMEL HARD CIDER

Recipe and photo courtesy
McCormick for Chefs

YIELD: 4

INGREDIENTS FOR BURNT CINNAMON

2 T cinnamon, ground
½ cup overproof whiskey
(110 Proof)

METHOD

1. In a pan, place cinnamon in the middle in a small mound.
2. Pour the whiskey around the cinnamon, but not on top. You want the whiskey touching the mound of cinnamon, but not covering it.
3. Light the whiskey on fire. This will burn the edges of the cinnamon and burn out once the alcohol burns off.
4. Mix the remaining liquid with the cinnamon.

INGREDIENTS FOR BURNT CINNAMON CARAMEL

½ cup caramel sauce
2 T burnt cinnamon

METHOD FOR THE BURNT CINNAMON CARAMEL

1. In a bowl, combine the burnt cinnamon and caramel sauce until there are no lumps.

INGREDIENTS FOR BURNT CINNAMON HARD CIDER

12 oz hard cider
1 T Burnt Cinnamon Caramel
1 tsp lemon juice, Fresh
4 ea. apple slices
1 cup ice

METHOD

1. In a shaker, pour hard cider, burnt cinnamon caramel, and lemon juice over ice.
2. Using a cocktail spoon, stir the drink until well incorporated. Do not cover and shake, as the carbonation from the cider may cause a shaker explosion!
3. Double strain into a tumbler glass or 4 shooter glasses.
4. Garnish with apple slices, and *optional* more burnt caramel, and serve.

FALLEN LOVE

Recipe and photo courtesy
©Cocktail.Vision2022

YIELD: 1

INGREDIENTS

2½ oz Genever
½ oz cardamom infused
maple syrup
3 dashes orange bitters
Splash of Distillers Cola

METHOD

1. Place a large ice rock into the glass. Set aside.
2. Combine Genever, maple syrup, and orange bitters in a cocktail mixing glass with ice. Stir to chill and dilute.
3. Double-strain into the prepared cocktail glass. Add a splash of cola.



AUTUMN BLISS

Recipe and photo courtesy
Hyatt Regency Maui

YIELD: 1

INGREDIENTS

1½ tsp simple syrup
1½ oz Lahaina dark rum
1½ oz apple cider
½ oz chilled ginger beer
Ice

METHOD

1. Combine all ingredients.
2. Garnish with a lime and orange wedge.



GIVE'EM PUMPKIN TO TALK ABOUT

Recipe and photo courtesy
©Cocktail.Vision2022

YIELD: 1

INGREDIENTS

2 oz bourbon
½ oz bitter orange liqueur
½ oz Aromatic liqueur
2 dashes chocolate bitters
1 tsp pumpkin butter
**Salted Pumpkin Spice Cocktail
Foam**
Garnish: Nutmeg

INGREDIENTS FOR SALTED PUMPKIN SPICE COCKTAIL FOAM

Pumpkin Spice Chocolate Cream
Liqueur
Saline Solution
N2O charged

METHOD

1. Combine bourbon, orange liqueur, aromatic liqueur, pumpkin butter, and bitters in a cocktail mixing glass. Stir well to combine.
2. Add ice and stir to chill and dilute. Double-strain over a large ice sphere.
3. Finish it up with cream charged salted Pumpkin Spice Chocolate Cream Liqueur and fresh ground nutmeg.

HARVEST MARGARITA

Recipe and photo courtesy
The Cup Bearer

YIELD: 1

INGREDIENTS

2 oz tequila
1 oz fresh lime juice
½ oz apple cider reduction
½ oz Grand Marnier
½ oz agave
For garnish: cinnamon stick,
rosemary, and star anise

METHOD

1. Rim rocks glass with kosher salt.
2. Combine all ingredients in a shaker.
3. Shake for 25 seconds, strain into rocks glass with fresh ice.
4. Serve.



the **ART** of CATERING FOOD

March 26-27, 2023

Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, FL

The Art of Catering Food Returns, March 26-27

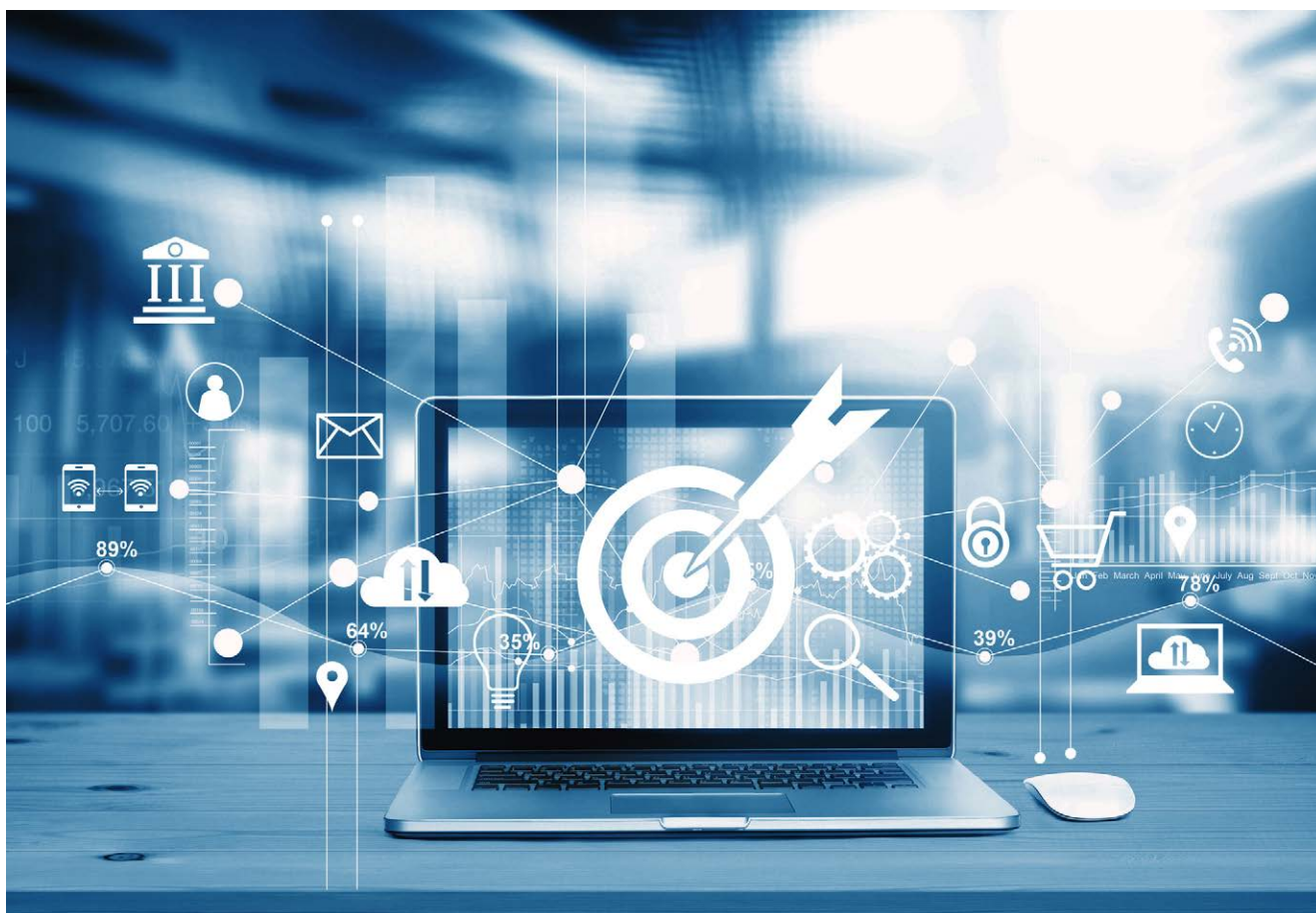
Experience the Art of Catering Food, an event designed for chefs, and taught by chefs. Over the course of two days leading into **Catersource + The Special Event**, you'll connect with experienced catering chefs sharing new culinary techniques, the latest trending ingredients, food costing, and everything else you need to need to turn your menus into works of art.

Are you ready to be inspired?

Whether you are looking for ways to enhance your operations or want to liaise with, learn from, and see what catering chefs around the country are doing to appeal to new clients, the Art of Catering Food will expand your catering skills and knowledge.



artofcateringfood.com | [#artofcateringfood](https://twitter.com/artofcateringfood)



Selling Missteps You Don't Know You Are Making

Picture this: Your website is converting, and your social media profiles are thriving. Your calendar is filled with prospective consultations to the point that your local coffee shop knows you from frequent caffeine-fueled meetings. But, after all that, you see prospect after prospect booking with competitors and your closing ratio shows the result of that.

Does this sound familiar? If so, you are not alone. It's easy to put the blame on your pricing for scaring people off, but often, it's your sales approach that needs an adjustment.

Here are a few missteps that you may need to address to up your sales game and close your next lead.

Your proposals don't tell a story.

Every time you send out a proposal, keep in mind that each prospect is likely comparing you to your competitors. That leads to the question: What sets your proposal apart? Clients tend to hire event professionals based on emotional connection, so it's up to you to craft custom proposals that speak to them personally. A corporate lead should not get the same template as an engaged couple and vice versa.

Take the time to understand a prospect's needs and tailor a

“AN EFFECTIVE SALES STRATEGY ENCOMPASSES THE THREE Cs: CUSTOMIZATION, COMMUNICATION, AND CONSISTENCY.”

proposal just for them. Don't be afraid to get creative with titles and tell a story that captures your vision. “Jack and Jill's Wintry Ballroom Bash” will speak to a couple more than a file named “Wedding Proposal” because it shows that their dream day is already on your mind. Likewise, include photos and sample menus from similar events you've done in the past to showcase your expertise at work. After all, the devil is in the details.

Your body language says “no thanks.”

Remember those nonverbal cues? They can say more than words in a sales setting. You could be hitting all of the right buzzwords, but if you're physically closed off, a client will see that and likely look elsewhere. Events are very personal experiences; prospects want to work with someone who is open and communicative. It's important to show that as well. Crossed arms, lack of eye contact, and fidgeting all speak to the contrary. Instead, train yourself to sit up straight, maintain eye contact and, most importantly, smile often.

It works both ways, too. Once you have your mind on body language, you can observe your prospect's nonverbal cues and tailor your sales approach accordingly. Did something you say cause them to close themselves off? Time to double back

and address their concerns. Do you notice that they are becoming more enthusiastic and engaged? It may be time to bring in upselling techniques.

Your training program is inconsistent.

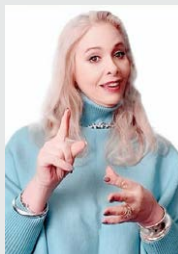
Consistency is key when you have a sales team. It's one thing when you're going at it alone, but as a team leader, it's up to you to ensure that every prospect receives the same client experience. Consistency is rooted in how your employees are trained. What does your training process look like? Do you have a comprehensive manual and a week's worth of shadowing? Or do you just let new hires learn as they go?

If you lean toward the latter, it's time to implement a streamlined training approach that coaches each employee to follow the same process. While you want to avoid going down the route of stuffy sales scripts, you still want to ensure that every member understands your

sales process, your expectations, and how you have learned to close a sale. You are the expert in your company, so go ahead and show others how you've found success.

An effective sales strategy encompasses the three Cs: customization, communication, and consistency. If you make an effort to implement these ideas into your sales approach, rest assured that your prospects will notice and you will see a change in your closing ratio.

There is one more strategy to address as you create a solid foundation for your revamped sales strategy: networking. For some, the idea of networking is terrifying; however, it is incredibly important for growing your business, no matter where it currently stands. Startups and established businesses alike have a lot to gain from expanding their networks and discovering opportunities with new partners across the industry. 



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

PART 2

SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD SERIES



By Amber Kispert

(RIGHT) **BEER BATTERED LINGCOD
AND CHIPS** FROM MAMA'S FISH
AND CHIPS. *Photo courtesy
Oceanwise Seafood Festival*

A New Seafood

Part 2 in our sustainable
seafood series: menu
& recipe inspiration





Wave of ood

sustainable
u development
piration



Seafood has gotten new legs (or fins rather) on menus in recent years thanks in no small part to the sustainable seafood movement.

However, identifying ways to incorporate seafood into catering menus has given pause to those chefs struggling to meet consumer demand, while remaining sustainable in the kitchen.

By encouraging consumers to eat a wider variety of seafood, chefs can also help keep fish supplies healthy. On today's menus, the most common types of seafood are salmon, cod, and tuna, which can lead to these species being overfished, and over-menus.

One way to encourage menu diversity is by using local, seasonal seafood. While diners may be hungry for specific types of seafood, it's the responsibility of the chef to ensure the menu stays sustainable, even if that means it is not always meeting demand.

"The best way to incorporate seafood on catering menus is to choose seafood that is seasonal, and keep the 'fresh catch' verbiage on the menus. [This allows] us to use what is in season and what will be available during the time of year that the function is being held," says Chef Nick Klug (Vice President of Culinary, Sports & Entertainment for Atlanta's Proof of the Pudding), who uses sustainable Albacore tuna, locally caught stone crabs, and redfish, as well as sustainably farmed oysters within his kitchen.

Sustainable seafood can also be so much more than fish, such as seaweed (for salads and garnishes) and saltwater (for cocktails).

"We can take plant-forward underwater," said Vincent Doumeizel (Vice President, Food, Beverage and Sustainability, Lloyd's Register; editor, *Seaweed Revolution: A Manifesto for a Sustainable Future*) during the Menus of Change event 2021. "We need to be the first generation to really understand how to use the ocean because it's one of the greatest untapped resources on the planet."

(BELOW) HONEY MUSSELS™ (FROM SAILORS SEAFOODS) HAVE A DISTINCT SWEET-SMOKY FLAVOR, WHICH IS BALANCED WITH AN ENJOYABLE TENDER AND PLUMP TEXTURE. THE HONEY MUSSEL SHELL COMES IN A RANGE OF COLORS, FROM DEEP GOLDEN TO DARK BROWN. THIS IS A NATURAL CHARACTERISTIC AND ADDS VARIETY TO ANY PLATE. Photo courtesy Oceanwise Seafood Festival



(RIGHT) SEARED RED FISH WITH HERB AND GREEN CHILE VINAIGRETTE, FARRO, CHARRED CAULIFLOWER, LIME, HERB-RADISH SALAD. Photo courtesy Proof of the Pudding



(BELOW) WILD SALMON HAND PIE: DECADENT CREAM CHEESE, SPINACH, ARTICHOKE, AND WILD SOCKEYE SALMON ARE MIXED AND ENCASED IN A HANDHELD, BUTTERY PUFF PASTRY SHELL FROM INTERCITY PACKERS. Photo courtesy Oceanwise Seafood Festival





(ABOVE) RADISH-HERB STUFFED TUNA, HOUSE KIMCHI, THAI VINAIGRETTE, BLACK SESAME, HERB SALAD. Photo courtesy Proof of the Pudding

Most importantly, sustainable seafood also allows chefs to get creative in their kitchens by utilizing different ingredients. For example, chefs can look to locally-caught Pacific Grenadier (a common bycatch of black cod) as a substitute for tilapia, but with more flavor and texture.

“We’re really just touching the surface of the water,” says Gary Patters, Executive Chef & Culinary Development Director for McCormick for Chefs (which listed seafood as one of 2022’s top culinary trends). “There’s so much below that adds flavor, adds creativity, adds color.”

FROM FIN TO GILL

Another way chefs can be sustainable in the kitchen is by using the whole fish.

Much like the “nose to tail” movement, the “fin to gill” concept finds innovative and creative ways to reduce waste in the kitchen, thus lessening the number of fish that need to be caught.

“Part of being sustainable is to use as much of the fish as I possibly can,” said Chef Mark Allison of [Forever Oceans](#) during a recent webinar on sustainable seafood for *Nation’s Restaurant News*.

Continued on page 38



SPIRULINA ICE CREAM

Recipe and photo courtesy
McCormick for Chefs

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

This refreshing treat stars Spirulina, a blue-green algae considered to be a superfood. This no-churn ice cream delivers sweet, earthy, and umami-forward flavors with every creamy bite.

INGREDIENTS FOR SWEET FURIKAKE SEASONING

- 9 T sugar
- ¼ cup white sesame seeds
- 2 T black sesame seeds
- 3 ea. sheets unseasoned nori (dried seaweed)
- 3 T bonito flakes
- 1½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper, coarse grind

METHOD

1. In a sauté pan, over medium heat melt sugar until golden brown. Pour onto silicone baking mat and let cool completely.

2. In a food processor, combine sesame seeds, bonito flakes, nori, and sea salt in food processor. Pulse until mixture is well blended but not powdered. Transfer to bowl and set aside.
3. Into same food processor break up cooled caramel and pulse until crumbled. Add to bowl with sesame mixture.
4. Add salt and black pepper to sesame caramel mixture and stir until well mixed. Hold in an airtight container in a cool, dry place.

INGREDIENTS FOR ICE CREAM

- ¼ cup Spirulina powder
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup sweetened condensed milk
- ½ cup evaporated milk
- ½ cup corn syrup
- 2 T sesame oil

METHOD

1. In a bowl, dissolve spirulina powder with a portion of the heavy cream. Transfer to blender.
2. Add the rest of the heavy cream, sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk, corn syrup, and sesame oil. Blend on high.
3. Transfer to bowl and stir in Sweet Furikake Seasoning. Freeze overnight to set.

TO SERVE

Serve one scoop of Spirulina Ice Cream and garnish with additional Sweet Furikake Seasoning.

Top 10

One way to help is by making species an option.

If swapping for certain species isn't an option, here's a list of the top 10.

Cod

WHY SWAP? Many species of Atlantic cod are overfished.

TOP SWAP



Coley, Hake, Pollock (shown)

Haddock

WHY SWAP? Popular species of haddock stock has been over-fished.

TOP SWAP



Coley

Halibut

WHY SWAP? Halibut is another slow-growing species that has been overfished to the point of being endangered.

TOP SWAP



Grey, Red, or Tubenose

The information on this page is for informational purposes only.

Sustainable Seafood Swaps

Help protect precious fish, marine environments, and good fishing livelihoods with some simple seafood swaps. You'll be giving some of our most 'at risk' opportunity to recover.

Look for certified or accredited seafood (MSC, ASC, BAP, MBASFW, SFP, Smart Catch, etc.) and here are some other ideas:

Plaice

WHY SWAP? Left to their own devices, plaice can live for 50 years or more. They grow and reproduce very slowly, making them vulnerable to overfishing. Some beam trawl fisheries catch vast numbers of young plaice as 'bycatch', and throw them back into the sea, dead.

TOP SWAPS



Dab, Flounder (shown), Sole

Prawns

WHY SWAP? King or tiger prawns are usually farmed in the tropics, often very intensively and in ways which can seriously damage local communities and the environment.

TOP SWAPS



Crab, Langoustines (shown), Mussels

Salmon

WHY SWAP? Salmon is sometimes farmed very intensively, leading to serious environmental problems.

TOP SWAP



Rainbow Trout (shown)

Sea Bass

WHY SWAP? Sea bass is commonly farmed in the Mediterranean, and is a carnivorous fish, raising the problem of fish-feed, meaning additional fish must be caught in order to feed them. Wild sea bass are often caught in pelagic trawls that can kill other sea life such as dolphins.

TOP SWAPS



Black Bream (shown), Porgy, Seabream

Skate

WHY SWAP? Sadly, the once "common" skate is now critically endangered, and several other species of skates and rays are overfished.

TOP SWAPS



Cuckoo Rays, Scallops, Spotted Rays, Starry Rays (shown)

Swordfish

WHY SWAP? Big, slow-growing 'game' fish like swordfish are particularly vulnerable to over-fishing.

TOP SWAP



Squid (shown)

Tuna

WHY SWAP? There are many species of tuna, a few of which are critically endangered and some of which are caught in ways that damage other marine life.

TOP SWAP



Sardine (shown)

* A NEW WAVE OF SEA FOOD: PART 2

Here are some ideas for using a whole fish:

HEAD: Dense in flavor and hidden meat, utilized often in global cuisine recipes

Recipe inspiration

- Fish Tacos with Yellowtail
- Can be added to soup, or it can be split, butterflied, and grilled

LOIN: Great for grilling, searing, or sliced raw

Recipe inspiration:

- Yellowtail or Kahala Ceviche

COLLAR: Grilled, roasted, or smoked, a highly flavored treat

Recipe inspiration:

- Amberjack Collars with garlic and ginger sauce

TAIL: Grilled or seared, a versatile portion size

Recipe inspiration:

- Kahala with jicama salad
- Deep-fry the salmon tail

BELLY: Rich in fat, excellent for poke or ceviche

Recipe inspiration

- Yellowtail poke
- Stuff salmon belly with crab and bake it in white wine
- Poached salmon rilletes using salmon belly trim

Other ideas, [according to fishmonger Tommy Gomes](#) for how to use an entire Alaska salmon:

- After you fillet the fish, you can scrape the carcass clean and make a tartare or a burger
- Keep the meat on the ribs and sauté the ribs as a dish
- Use the carcass to make fish stock
- Smoke or barbecue the tongue
- Use the fins to make grilled salmon wings with teriyaki and yuzu ponzu

“Through sourcing sustainable seafood and putting that on our menu and telling that story, we as chefs can contribute to the cause of having a healthy ocean,” said Chef Sammy Monsour of Preux & Proper out of Los Angeles during a James Beard Foundation webinar on its sustainable seafood rating program [Smart Catch](#), which is overseen by [Postelsia](#). “This topic is really as vast as the ocean.”

In closing, when cooking with sustainable seafood, there really is no wrong way to do it.

Hook. Line. And sinker.

Editor's note: The publication, Nation's Restaurant News, is owned and operated by Informa Connect, Catersource's parent company. 



SALMON TARTARE WITH MANGO

Recipe and photo courtesy Benjamin Kalifa for Blue Glacier

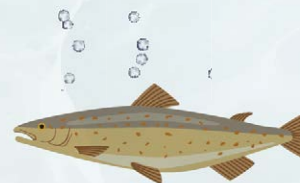
YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

2–3 salmon fillets
1 ea. fresh ripe mango
1 ea. green lime
1 ea. lemon
Olive oil
Chive sprigs
Nuts
Fleur de Sel (or any sea salt of your choosing)
Crushed pepper
Pastry rings

METHOD

1. Slice salmon. Peel mango and cut into thin slices.
2. Rinse and chop chives. Mix chives with chopped salmon and sliced mango.
3. Sprinkle with lemon and lime and a dash of olive oil. Add some salt and pepper. Keep cool for three hours.
4. Top tartare with chopped nuts. Mold tartare into pastry ring and place on four plates, packing the mixture well. Carefully remove the circle and serve immediately.





SEA WATER MARTINI

Recipe and photo courtesy McCormick for Chefs

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

A nautical journey for your mouth, this sea water martini is a salty alternative to the traditional dirty martini. Hold the olives, add sea grapes.

INGREDIENTS FOR SPICED SEA WATER

- 2 cups tonic
- 2 tsp juniper berries
- 1 tsp coriander seed
- ½ tsp fennel seed
- 1 tsp sea water

METHOD

1. In a container, combine tonic, juniper, coriander, fennel, and sea water. Refrigerate overnight.
2. Strain mixture after flavors have extracted. Hold refrigerated for service.

INGREDIENTS FOR MARTINI

- 2 cups Spiced Sea Water
- 6 oz gin
- 8 ea. sea grapes, hydrated according to package
- Ice as needed

METHOD

1. Fill glass with ice and set aside.
2. Fill cocktail shaker with ice, 4 ounces spiced sea water, 1½ ounces gin and shake vigorously for 30 seconds.
3. Discard the ice in the prepared glass and strain sea water into the chilled glass.
4. Garnish with 2 clusters of sea grapes. Serve chilled.

MIXED SEAWEED PICKLES

Recipe courtesy McCormick for Chefs

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

A mixed variety of sea botanicals pickled in a sweet, flavorful brine can be enjoyed on their own or as a garnish for sandwiches.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups water
- 1 cups rice vinegar
- ½ cup white sugar
- 2 ea. garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp cracked black pepper
- 1 tsp coriander seed
- 1 tsp mustard seed
- 1 tsp dill seed
- 1 oz mixed seaweed blend, dried

METHOD

1. In a saucepot, over medium heat combine water, vinegar, garlic cloves, black peppercorns, coriander, mustard, and dill. Heat through until sugar has dissolved. Cool completely.
2. Place assorted seaweed in cooled pickling liquid. Refrigerate for a minimum of 1 hour. Hold refrigerated until needed.





CHESAPEAKE BAY CRAB CAKE RECIPE

Recipe and photo courtesy Hyatt Regency
Chesapeake Bay Golf Resort, Spa and Marina

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb fresh jumbo lump crab meat
- 1 T Dijon mustard
- 2 T mayonnaise
- 3 oz panko breadcrumbs
- 1 T Old Bay seasoning
- Fresh parsley to taste

METHOD

Mix all ingredients and portion them into round balls and press until $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick. Fry cakes in hot skillet for eight to 10 minutes or broil until golden brown. Plate and enjoy!

NEW POTATOES WITH U.S. FARM-RAISED CAVIAR

Recipe and photo courtesy the National
Aquaculture Association

YIELD: 24

INGREDIENTS

- 12 ea. small new potatoes
- 1 T olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream or crème fraîche
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh chopped chives or dill
- 1 (2-ounce) jar U.S. farm-raised caviar

METHOD

1. Scrub potatoes. Cut potatoes in half; cut a thin slice off the bottom of each half so the potatoes will sit upright on a baking sheet. Toss the potatoes with olive oil and salt.
2. Place on a baking sheet and roast at 425° F for 25 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Remove from oven and cool slightly. Place potatoes on a serving dish.
3. Top each potato with a teaspoon of sour cream, chives, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon caviar.



SPAGHETTI CON LE SARDE

Recipe and photo courtesy Barilla

INGREDIENTS

- 1 box pasta
- 6 T evoo, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$ ea. Vidalia onion, sliced
- 8 oz wild fennel fronds, blanched
- 10 oz sardines, clean bone off
- 2 ea. salted anchovies
- 2 T toasted pine nuts
- 2 T golden raisins
- 1 pinch saffron, soaked in hot water for 10 minutes
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 3 T breadcrumbs

METHOD

1. Sauté 2 tbs evoo and breadcrumbs until crispy, set aside
2. Place a pot of water to boil, cook pasta according to directions. Meanwhile in a skillet sauté onion with half the olive oil for three minutes. Add anchovies and sardines, slowly cook until fish is breaking down. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pasta cooking water, saffron, raisins, and blanched fennel. Drain pasta and toss with sardine sauce, breadcrumbs, and pine nuts before serving.

Don't just read... *Listen*

Juicy food ideas, dazzling event designs, and other boots-on-the-ground tips to help caterers and event planners like you be more successful in your business.



*Candid
Conversations*

Powered by Catersource + The Special Event



For sponsorship opportunities,
contact sales@catersource.com

Listen at www.catersource.com/podcasts or search
for Candid Conversations in your favorite podcast app



Recession-Proofing Your Business

If you listen to or watch the news, you've surely heard talk about a coming recession. There is no shortage of fearful headlines predicting a pullback in spending, a crashing stock market, and continued inflation. But as I talk to caterers across the country, the main challenges they are facing don't correlate with a recession. Challenges, like finding enough employees and keeping up with demand and supply chain issues, are reflective of a different story.

There are many additional indicators that future demand for our services continues to be strong. So, what do we make of these conflicting points? And what do caterers need to do moving forward? Here are a few of my thoughts.

How bad can it be?

It's hard to imagine any situation being worse than what we just went through. Going through the pandemic was crushing for an industry that thrives on large gatherings of people. As we continue to recover, those who have made it through find themselves

with thicker skin and a greater sense of resiliency. One caterer told me: "Even if a recession does come, a 20–30% pull back in sales is nothing compared to being shut down." I suggest caterers keep it in perspective and know that they can probably handle whatever pullback comes our way after navigating COVID.

Protect your reputation

Demand is high for caterers. There is pent up demand for gatherings, a backlog of weddings, and fatigue around virtual gatherings. Between the quick return of business and fear



I SUGGEST CATERERS KEEP IT IN PERSPECTIVE AND KNOW THAT THEY CAN PROBABLY HANDLE WHATEVER PULLBACK COMES OUR WAY AFTER NAVIGATING COVID."

of a downturn, it's tempting to take on as much as possible. This is a risky proposition though. Understanding capacity will make or break caterers over the next six to 12 months. Overextending yourself on key days can have a lasting impact on your reputation as a business. While the effects of that now might be small, it gets magnified if a recession does indeed come. With the proliferation of the internet, caterers are publicly being judged every day by clients and guests. I recently heard a story about a caterer being removed from three preferred venue lists in one week because of their inability to fully staff their events. When there is a risk of sacrificing the quality of food and service, it's time to see the bigger picture and politely decline that additional event.

Raise your prices

Increasing costs continue to be a challenge for companies that bid for events months and sometimes years in advance. I read a recent article that showed overall food prices have increased by at least 10% in 2022. At the same time, I continue to hear caterers are turning away business, sometimes up to 50% of what is coming in. Basic economics instructs that when demand is high, price sensitivity declines. Increasing prices protects what are already slim margins for caterers and doing so when demand is high limits the amount of pushback received from clients. Instead of asking for discounts, clients are just thankful when their

event can be accommodated. If you haven't raised your prices, now is the time to do it. You can always reduce them in the future, but I've found that discounting tends to cause more problems for businesses than the benefits it brings.

Build your savings

If you are worried about an upcoming recession, there are steps you can take to minimize the impact it will have on your business. If your savings got depleted, it might be a good time to build up three to six months of fixed expenses. This provides flexibility for a wide variety of situations (positive and negative) that come your way. When the economy pulls back it can present a great opportunity to add talent or invest in equipment or real estate at a reduced price. When others are contracting it presents an opportune time to expand and businesses with a healthy balance sheet can take advantage of these situations. Additionally, businesses that have strong savings aren't prone to knee jerk reactions when costs increase or sales decrease. They can weather a

storm and not have to significantly cut expenses or people.

I'm not so sure that catastrophic impacts of a recession are as imminent as the media suggests. There were many industries that were not negatively impacted by the pandemic. They actually had record years and maybe this is more of a correction for those industries. A minor pull-back might not be the worst thing. Many of us would welcome a labor market that loosened up and an easing of supply chain issues. Regardless of what happens, conscientiously operating a business is one of the biggest responsibilities of CEOs and business owners. It's important to be aware of outside forces, but not let them dictate and interfere with the overall vision and direction of the company. It can be tough to spend time working on the business when the craziness of the day-to-day seems to have a gravitational pull on our time. It is precisely these times though that produce long term results and set caterers on a successful path for many years to come. 



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.



In a World of Staffing Shortages & Burnout, How Do You Keep Your Team Engaged & Happy?

While we are all counting our blessings that catering business is back in full force, it doesn't make the stress, anxiety, and overwork that's arrived in its wake any less painful. [A Bloomberg Survey](#) from last year noted that over half of hospitality workers wouldn't return to their job, with a third considering not returning to hospitality at all. And we're all feeling those effects. In fact, the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce recently shared](#) that nearly half of leisure and hospitality jobs remain unfilled in July 2022, and the quit rate is the highest of any industry.

If your business is struggling with staffing shortages and burnout, just know you're not alone! We will get through this phase. But what many catering companies are doing now to rise above this ever-evolving challenge is simple: Keep current team members happy.

How do you do that effectively, despite the never-ending list of BEOs and contracts to fill, the late nights and the physical demands of the job? We asked catering executives from across the country on the International Caterers Association (ICA) Roundtable. Today, we're sharing what they had to say to spark a little inspiration for your own business and team!

TIP #1: SHOW THEM THE MONEY & PERKS

As they say, money talks. If the business is there, the money should be too. It may be a stretch to give bonuses or raise salaries, but it is one of the (if not the) most effective ways to keep your team satisfied. Here are a few ideas other caterers are deploying:

"We pay our hourly team members full-time hours during the pockets of downtime we have over the summer months," says Rajan Mistry, Founder, District Events & Catering.

"The team is the backbone of our business. They sweat and hustle so hard for the couples getting married. We have to take care of them. A few ways we do that: big gratuities, cash bonuses for random acts, daycare gift cards, pedicure gift cards, gas cards, new shoes... We know their work, they earn it," says Brandon Snooks, Founding Chef, Farm to Fire by Hudson Valley BBQ Co.

TIP #2: OFFER PTO AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE

It's easy to decline PTO when the season gets busy. But it's really difficult to replace that employee once they run toward greener pastures that will approve that PTO. Even in the difficult times, it's important to work in enough time for rest. You can be strategic about it like these businesses, too.

"PTO is the way to go! We just closed from July 4th to July 7th to give everyone a little summer break after a very intense May and June. If you see an 'opening' in your calendar, even a day or two, I highly recommend this to boost morale and productivity," says Ryan Corvaia, Founder & Owner, Dish Food & Events.

"We block off at least one weekend a month from incoming business so we can say yes to as many vacation requests



as we can. We already pay well, but one of our core values is ‘family first—we work to live, not live to work,’ so this is important,” says Julia Kendrick Conway, CEO, Assaggiare Mendocino, Inc.

TIP #3: GO ON AN ADVENTURE OR GET SOCIAL

One part of loving your job is simple: you want to have fun! How can you infuse fun into the calendar? It doesn’t have to be anything overly complicated. Here’s some inspiration:

“In addition to all the pay and benefit incentives, we believe company culture is critical to success—our culture club works with the celebration committee to plan quarterly events. We have an annual tubing adventure in July that everyone looks forward to all year long. We budget for events, swag, and incentives for our team each quarter. We find that offering more than just a livable wage helps us maintain the incredible team that we have. We receive more employment applications from our staff referring their friends to work with us, meaning they’re just as excited about what we offer as we think they are,” says Christopher Sanchez, LUX Catering & Events, Managing Partner.

“I took some of my staff kayaking this week and then out to dinner. We’ve

gone every year for the last four years! Everybody loves it, and it feels like being on vacation for an hour,” says Amy Jurist, Owner/Head Chef/Pastry Chef/ Full-Service Caterer at Amy’s Culinary Adventures.

TIP #4: CONTINUED RECOGNITION & GENUINE APPRECIATION

When stress gets to us, it’s easy to get into that hustle mode where everything else besides getting the job done falls to the wayside. But continued recognition of your team who is going through the same thing in the trenches with you is important. Here are a few ways to slow down and show the love:

“Most meaningfully, I have taken the time to sit down with each of my main staff, thank them for all of their help and really explain all of the ways I see them as an asset to the team. But I have also purchased very thoughtful and generous gifts based on what exactly they would love for all of my main staff (lux spa days, designer bags, etc.) and have been trying to do little things on the job like bringing smoothies/coffees/treats for the more ‘transient’ team members as well. I think it is absolutely essential to make sure your team is feeling the love and being constantly reminded of

ONE PART OF LOVING YOUR JOB IS TO HAVE FUN, SO IT’S IMPORTANT TO INFUSE FUN INTO THE CALENDAR. ONE WAY THAT LUX CATERING & EVENTS BRINGS FUN TO THE JOB IS THROUGH ITS ANNUAL TUBING TRIP. PHOTO COURTESY LUX CATERING & EVENTS

what an asset they are, now more than ever,” says Melissa Peralta, Chef + Founder at Suddenly Simple Events.

YOUR TEAM IS YOUR GREATEST ASSET & KEY TO SUCCESS; TREAT THEM ACCORDINGLY

The moral of the story is that your team is the most valuable asset you have to serve your customers and gain new business. Without them, you wouldn’t be able to do any of it. Treat them accordingly, and you’ll see your business thrive with a happy and engaged team. 

District Events & Catering, Farm to Fire by Hudson Valley BBQ Co, Dish Food & Events, Assaggiare Mendocino, Inc., Amy’s Culinary Adventures, LUX Catering & Events, and Suddenly Simple Events are proud members of the ICA. For more information on how to join the ICA and to be notified of future catering industry webinars, events, and education opportunities, visit internationalcaterers.org.



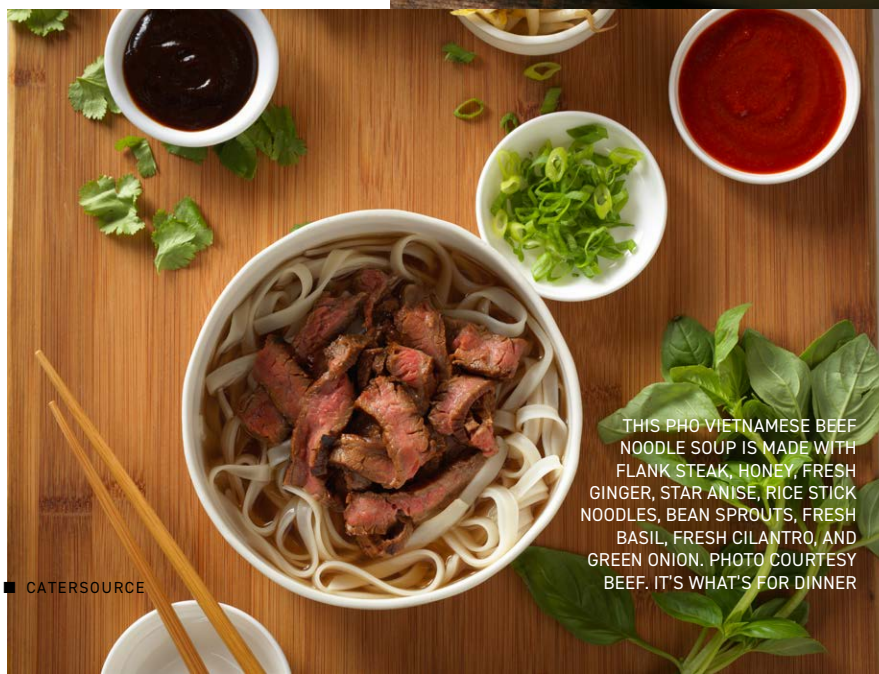
By Amber Kispert

SOUP'S ON!

SOUPS AND STEWS ARE AN EXCEPTIONAL WINTER WARMUP ON COLD EVENINGS



TOMATO BASIL SOUP WITH COCONUT OIL, VEGETABLE STOCK, AND COCONUT MILK FROM SUKI OTSUKI, OWNER & CHEF, FOUR DIMENSIONS RETREATS, DALLAS, TX. PHOTO COURTESY THE PERFECT PURÉE



THIS PHO VIETNAMESE BEEF NOODLE SOUP IS MADE WITH FLANK STEAK, HONEY, FRESH GINGER, STAR ANISE, RICE STICK NOODLES, BEAN SPROUTS, FRESH BASIL, FRESH CILANTRO, AND GREEN ONION. PHOTO COURTESY BEEF. IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER

(RIGHT) CHICKEN & DUMPLING SOUP MADE WITH RITZ CRACKERS. RECIPE AND PHOTO COURTESY MONDELÉZ INTERNATIONAL FOODSERVICE



NOW THAT THE TEMPERATURES ARE COOLING, YOUR CLIENTS WILL BE LOOKING FOR SOME COMFORTING AND COZY RECIPES TO KEEP THEM WARM DURING YOUR EVENT. FORTUNATELY, COMFY SOUPS AND STEWS ARE HEATING UP MENUS EVERYWHERE, BUT THEY'RE A FAR CRY FROM THE CHICKEN NOODLE AND NEW ENGLAND CLAM CHOWDERS OF YESTERYEAR.



(ABOVE) TOMATO BISQUE SOUP SIPS WITH MINI GRILLED CHEESE TRIANGLES FROM DSQUARED HOSPITALITY COMPANY (TUXEDOS AND TENNIS SHOES). PHOTO COURTESY REBECCA ELLISON

"We have seen the charcuterie trend come and go, salads have lasted the test of time, but what I see going into the fall of 2022 is the resurgence of an elevated soup presentation," Chef Jason Sutton (Footers Catering) says. "This allows chefs to have an impressively artistic approach to an empty canvas and leaving hints to the meal about to be presented."

While soups have always been a starter or side dish staple, they're starting to make a play to become the next main dish star. Many soup fans are looking for diversity in their liquids, including ingredients to global influences (pho, ramen, and pozole for example), as well as everything from nutritional profiles to sustainable sourcing.

"Soup is so fun and often underutilized in the world of catering, but actually is so versatile," says Lisa Ware (Owner, Catering by Michaels). "Soup is packed with

flavor and often a great way to incorporate some nostalgia into your catered event. Soup is like a warm hug from you to your guests."

Here are a few trends, according to [taste.com](https://www.taste.com), that menus will be waving this fall and winter.

FALL FLAVORS

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE THE FLAVORS OF FALL:

Pumpkin, squash, cinnamon, and ginger. There's just something about those flavors that instantly warms you up. However, these always-popular flavors are getting a bit of a makeover on menus. Try them with a Thai twist, top them with savory garnishes or add some sweetness with a swig of cider and some crispy apple croutons.

CURRIED KABOCHA SQUASH SOUP

*Recipe and photo courtesy
DSquared Hospitality Company
(Tuxedos and Tennis Shoes)*

YIELD: 80

INGREDIENTS

8 lbs kabocha squash
5 T canola oil
2 ea. yellow colossal onion,
diced
8 ea. garlic cloves, minced
4 tsp curry powder
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground coriander seed
1 tsp minced fresh ginger
½ tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp turmeric
10 cups vegetable stock
1 cup heavy cream
60 ea. lemongrass
marshmallows for garnish
Salt to taste

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Cut squash into wedges and clean out seeds, drizzle with 1 T of oil and season. Roast for 30-40 minutes until tender. When cool enough to handle, scoop the meat away from the skin.
3. In a large sauce pot sauté onion in 2 T of oil until translucent. Add all the rest of the spices and cook for another minute or two until fragrant.
4. Add cooked squash and cover with stock, simmer for 12 minutes. Use stick blender to puree. Add cream and adjust seasoning. Strain to remove any chunky bits and cool until needed.
5. Garnish with marshmallows.



INGREDIENTS FOR LEMONGRASS MARSHMALLOWS

1 T plus 2 tsp gelatin
⅓ cup lemongrass water
6 tsp plus .66 cup cornstarch
1 cup granulated sugar
1 oz light corn syrup
3 ea. egg whites
1 ea. fresh lemongrass stick
⅓ cup powdered sugar

METHOD

1. Begin by making tea with one lemongrass stick chopped up and a cup of water. Simmer to infuse for 20 minutes then drain and chill (you only need .33 cup of lemongrass water,

reserve the rest for another use).

2. In a small bowl mix the gelatin with .33 cup of lemongrass water and let stand for 15 minutes. Meanwhile spray a hotel pan with pan spray and lightly dust with cornstarch (6 tsp) tapping out excess.
3. In a small saucepan mix the sugar with .33 cup of water and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Add the corn syrup and cook over medium high heat without stirring until 260 degrees on the candy thermometer. Once off the heat, stir in the gelatin mixture until dissolved.
4. In a stand mixture beat egg whites until soft peaks form. With the machine running, drizzle in the hot syrup slowly in a steady stream down the side of the bowl and scrape into prepared pan to let set for three hours.
5. Cut with a sharp knife. Sift and mix remaining cornstarch (.66 cups) and powdered sugar thoroughly. Toss marshmallows in the sifted cornstarch and powdered sugar mix.
6. Float on top of the squash soup.

PARSNIP SOUP WITH VANILLA BEAN CREME FRAICHE

*Recipe and photo courtesy
The Butler's Pantry*

INGREDIENTS

- 2 T olive oil
- 1 ea. medium yellow onion,
small dice
- 4 ea. cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 ea. bay leaf
- 3 ea. sprigs of thyme
- 3 cups parsnips, peeled and
chopped
- 40 oz water
- Salt to taste
(approximately 1½ T)
- 1 cup cream

METHOD

1. Preheat a medium non-reactive pot over medium heat. Add the olive oil. Allow it to heat for a moment then stir it around to coat the bottom of the pan. Add the onions, garlic, bay leaf and thyme. Turn the heat to medium-low and sweat the onions stirring occasionally until soft without browning.
2. Add the parsnips covered with the water. Bring to a simmer and allow to cook uncovered for about 45 minutes or until the parsnips are soft.
3. Remove the bay leaf and thyme then add the salt and the rest of the contents of the pot to a blender and puree until smooth. Stir in the cream and adjust the seasoning if necessary.

INGREDIENTS FOR VANILLA BEAN CREME FRAICHE

- 4 oz creme fraiche
- ½ vanilla bean
- 1 tsp salt
- Water to consistency

METHOD

1. Slice the vanilla bean in half. Scrape the bean and add the contents to the creme fraiche. Save the outside of the vanilla bean for another application. Whisk the salt, creme fraiche and vanilla bean together. Slowly add the water and stir until it is a syrupy consistency.
2. Add a spoon or two of creme fraiche to each bowl of soup.

METHOD FOR CRISPY FOCACCIA

1. Slice the focaccia evenly, lightly brush with extra virgin olive oil and bake in

a preheated oven at 350 degrees until a light golden brown, approximately 10 minutes.

INGREDIENTS FOR LEMON WHIPPED RICOTTA

- ¾ cup ricotta
- 1 tsp salt
- Zest of ½ a lemon
- ½ tsp black pepper

METHOD FOR FRIED PARSNIPS

1. Peel parsnips with a vegetable peeler and fry in a 280-degree fryer constantly stirring until the bubbles slow and the color darkens on the parsnips—season with salt and pepper.



LIGHT IT UP

SOME CONSUMERS ARE

opting for lighter versions of their favorite soups made with green vegetables (pea, zucchini, and broccoli), coconut-based broths and soups with extra citrus.

A MEAL IN A BOWL

BEEF UP YOUR SOUPS

with the addition of hearty ingredients: think paella-soup mashup, lamb shanks tossed into simple tomato or a bulked-out broth with gnocchi or rice. Also, don't forget about the ever-popular chili or stew options. Your appetizer or side suddenly becomes a filling dinner.



MAINE LOBSTER STEW

Recipe and photo courtesy Blue Elephant Catering & Events

INGREDIENTS

The meat from 2 large lobsters (approximately 4 cups)
4 to 6 T butter
6 cups whole milk
2 cups heavy cream
Kosher salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
Paprika, to taste
Fresh chopped parsley for garnish

METHOD

1. Steam the lobsters and shred the meat. Leave a third of the lobster in larger chunks. It doesn't have to be pretty. In fact, the messier the better for this recipe.
2. Pan-fry the shredded lobster in 6 tablespoons of butter until lightly browned. You will know it's ready when it turns a warm orange color and is warmed through. Be careful not to burn the butter.
3. In a Dutch oven, heat the milk, being careful not to boil it. Add lobster to hot milk and cook slowly for 8-10 minutes. Stir in the heavy cream and bring nearly to a boil. Lower heat and add salt and pepper to taste and paprika for color. Add a dash of sherry if desired. Sprinkle with chopped parsley.



USE YOUR NOODLE

ASIA PROBABLY HAS ONE of the biggest impacts on the world of soups thanks to ramen, pho, tom yum, tom kha gai, and laksa. Who doesn't love a soup that requires a spoon, fork, and chopsticks to consume it?

SAY CHEESE

CHEESE CAN BE A GREAT addition to several different kinds of soup, but the breakout star when it comes to cheese is obviously French onion. You can even make this fall-time favorite vegan by using plant-based cheese as an alternative.



MARCIA SELDEN CATERING & EVENTS' BOURSIN PANNA COTTA WITH SUNCHOKE BISQUE AND CRISPY GARLIC CHIPS. THE SOUP IS POURED TABLESIDE WHICH MAKES FOR A BEAUTIFUL PRESENTATION. PHOTO COURTESY JULIE BIDWELL

CHAMPIGNON AND WALLA WALLA ONION SOUP WITH NURISHH® PLANT-BASED PARMESAN CRUST

Recipe courtesy Chef Thomas Horner, Marriott

YIELD: 24

INGREDIENTS

12 lbs Walla Walla onions, sliced thin
6 lbs white button mushrooms, sliced thin
4 cups sherry wine
½ cup vegetable base or roasted onion base
12 ea. fresh thyme sprigs, leaves picked
4 T kosher salt
24 ea. large croutons (the size of the vessel being served)
6 cups Nurishh® Parmesan Style Plant-Based Cheese Shreds
1 cup chopped fresh parsley
Fresh cracked pepper, as needed

METHOD

1. Caramelize the onions in a medium pot.
2. Add the mushrooms and sweat them.
3. Add the sherry to deglaze the pot and cover. Simmer for 5 minutes.
4. Add the base and 1 cup water.
5. Add the thyme and season to taste with

salt. Simmer until the soup reaches the desired consistency.

6. Portion the soup into bowls. Cover each with a crouton and ¼ cup plant-based Parmesan cheese.
7. Place under the broiler until cheese starts to melt and achieves the desired color.
8. Top with chopped parsley and cracked pepper and serve immediately.



Photo courtesy Bel Brands



PORK PHO

*Recipe and photo courtesy
Catering by Michaels*

YIELD: 5 GALLONS

INGREDIENTS FOR BROTH

½ cup coriander, whole
1½ tsp cloves, whole
1 T anise seeds, whole
3 T black peppercorns, whole
4–5 ea. cinnamon sticks
8 gallons chicken broth
10 lbs pork bones, roasted

2 lbs yellow onion, roughly chopped
8 oz fresh ginger, sliced
½ cup granulated sugar
½ cup fish sauce
3½ oz garlic, chopped
2 oz jalapeños, roughly chopped

METHOD

1. In a dry pan, toast coriander, cloves, anise, black peppercorns and cinnamon for 5 minutes on medium heat, being careful not to burn.
2. Remove spices from heat.



INGREDIENTS FOR FIVE-SPICE PORK

1 tsp five-spice powder
2 T kosher salt
2 tsp ground black pepper
5 lbs boneless pork butt or shoulder, cut into 2" chunks
½ cup vegetable oil

MIX-INS

Cooked rice stick noodles
 Sliced radish
 Edamame
 Bean sprouts
 Sliced jalapeños
 Lime wedges
 Julienned red bell pepper
 Sliced scallions
 Fresh mint leaves
 Fresh basil leaves
 Fresh cilantro leaves
 Sriracha
 Hoisin sauce

METHOD

1. In a large pot, combine toasted spices, chicken stock, pork bones, onion, ginger, sugar, fish sauce, garlic and jalapeno.
2. Bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer.
3. Simmer for 2–3 hours, then remove from heat and strain liquid, discarding solids.
4. To make the pork, combine five spice, kosher salt and black pepper together.
5. Season the pork on all sides, using all of the mixture.
6. Heat vegetable oil in a hot sauté pan and sear the pork on all sides.
7. Transfer pork to a hotel pan, cover with foil, and cook in a 300 degree oven for about 2 hours, or until pork is tender.
8. Cool until manageable and then shred.
9. Serve broth with pork and desired mix-ins.

HEALTHY AND HEARTY

IT'S EASY TO CHECK OFF YOUR daily intake of vegetables, proteins, and spices (stuffed with antioxidants and lots of fiber) with a single bowl of soup. It may seem like an oxymoron, but it is possible to have a soup that is both nutritious and delicious.

Cold and chilled soups are also

making a splash as a refreshing and healthy appetizer option during summer events.

"A noticeable soup trend is serving soup in the summer months more than in fall and winter," says Desiree Jones with DSquared Hospitality Company (Tuxedos and Tennis Shoes).

"Our theory is that event attendees are already making soups at home in the colder months, but rarely are they whipping up their own gazpacho in the summer. A summer soup is inherently more novel and a great vehicle for bright and fresh flavors!"



AVOCADO GAZPACHO

Recipe courtesy Pinch Food Design

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ea. cucumbers, rough chopped
- ½ Vidalia red onion, rough chopped
- 1 ea. clove garlic, minced
- 1 ea. jalapeno, chopped with seeds
- 1½ tsp salt
- 2 T fresh lime juice
- 1 T red wine vinegar
- 2 T extra virgin olive oil
- 1 ea. avocado, pitted and peeled
- 1 bunch cilantro with stems

METHOD

1. In mixing bowl, toss cucumbers, onion, garlic, and jalapeno with salt. Let sit 30 minutes.
2. Add lime juice, vinegar and oil and pour the whole mixture into blender and puree.
3. Add avocado and cilantro and puree again until creamy.

RETRO REVIVALS

It's no secret that everyone is looking for nostalgia, and soups are no exception. Whether it's potato and leek, chicken and dumplings, or tomato, chefs are bringing back old school soups to their menus.

"Even though they want the comfort and memory of those dishes," says Chef Dewey Losasso (Bil Hansen Catering), "they also want to have a cleaner, more modern approach."

Joanie Powell (Chef by Design) agrees. "Our clients are looking for comfort, a sense of nostalgia, and nourishment," she says.

TOMATO SOUP

Recipe and photo courtesy Chef by Design

INGREDIENTS

8 ea. large vine ripe tomatoes
(during off-season, use 2
14 ½ oz cans San Marzano
tomatoes)
1 ea. medium onion, yellow
or white
4 ea. large cloves garlic
3 T extra virgin olive oil
6 T butter
3 T sugar
1 cup sherry
1 cup heavy cream
½ cup fresh basil, plus more
for garnish
46 oz liquid base (water,
chicken stock, and
vegetable broth)
Parsley for garnish
Salt

METHOD

1. Quarter tomatoes and onion
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine ingredients with 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil and a liberal amount of salt
3. Roast at 425 degrees for 20 minutes

4. Remove from oven and allow to cool
5. In a large pot, add 6 tablespoons of butter and 3 tablespoons of sugar. Stir until butter has melted and sugar has dissolved. As butter begins to brown, add one cup of sherry
6. Reduce for two minutes, add vegetables and liquid. Add an additional 46 oz of liquid (water, chicken stock, vegetable broth). Bring to gentle boil and reduce heat to simmer for 20–30 minutes
7. Add 1 cup heavy cream and ½ cup fresh basil
8. Blend with immersion blender until smooth
9. Season to taste
10. Garnish with sprigs of fresh basil and roughly chopped flat leaf parsley.
11. Serve with a crusty baguette.

MAKE IT FUN

Another big fall trend for soups and stews will be to incorporate them into hors d'oeuvres, late night snacks, and stations. Think: little trio of soups in tiny mugs, the requisite tomato with the tiny grilled cheese, the gazpacho with the little bottle of tequila, according to Kathleen Stoehr (Director of Community & Content Strategy for Informa Connect). "I tested the Avocado Gazpacho from Pinch [previous page]. It's perfect as a shooter. No more than an ounce, liquid sunshine."

"Serving soups and stews in fun vessels that are easy to carry like shot glasses and martini glasses are a great way to incorporate soup favorites outside of the traditional starter course," says Reuben Bell (Blue Elephant Events & Catering). "New England Clam Chowder in a tall shot glass with a perfectly placed oyster cracker makes a great presentation. Chilled fruit soups and gazpacho make refreshing shooters in the summertime as well."

Jones of DSquared agrees. "Sans spoons, soup sips are effortlessly adorable and make for a more trendy and exciting way to eat soup," she says.

At Footers, they pour their soups tableside for extra impact.

"A quenelle of Honey Goat Cheese Mousse sits in the corner of the dish with torn basil and fresh cracked pepper leaving the blank space for the silky orange and gold soup to be poured beautifully on top as the grissini cracker slowly starts to stir the flavor together," Sutton says of their tableside butternut squash soup.

Bell also suggests setting up a soup or chowder station as a fun action station for a wedding or corporate event. Offer several choices and serve them out of bread bowls with a variety of toppings.

Over at DSquared, they have a wedding in fall 2022 where the grooms are making soup the star. "The grooms will be both making, and serving, a soup course to their guests out of soup bowls they are making themselves, which will then serve as the take-home gifts," Jones says.

These soup recipes are guaranteed to heat up your winter. "Let your guests enjoy playing with their food as you present a highly elevated form of one of the most humble and classic dishes known to mankind, the soup," Sutton says. Bon Appetit! 



The Healthy Kitchen

In my past 35 years of catering experience and nearly a decade of consulting, I have never seen such an onslaught of challenges like the catering industry faces today. From widespread labor shortages, product shortages, and the closing and reopening of businesses, COVID-19 has proved itself to be a formidable opponent of our industry. Despite this, I've traveled to dozens of businesses and have seen some companies thriving during this difficult period. There was one thing in common with all the successful companies; they were all able to answer this seemingly simple question: *how healthy is your kitchen?*

In this case, health does not refer to the overall cleanliness of the kitchen, or how safely food is stored; instead it refers to the mental health of the kitchen staff. How mentally well are your employees, and do they feel well supported by their employer? A survey from The Burnt Chef Project back in 2020 states that:

- 46% of the respondents were not very confident talking to their managers or co-workers about mental health
- 61% experienced three or more instances of poor mental health as a result of their role in hospitality
- 36% said they would talk to their manager or colleague about mental health if asked

“61% EXPERIENCED THREE OR MORE INSTANCES OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH AS A RESULT OF THEIR ROLE IN HOSPITALITY.”

- Only 17% were confident to raise the subject of mental health in their workplace

From what I've seen, successful kitchens are those that prioritize the wellness of their employees. They go beyond standard industry pay and benefits packages, which are undoubtedly important, to ensuring that employees have access to mental health and wellness programs and a strong company support system. This can create an environment where employees feel well-prepared to handle the stressful nature of their jobs, because they know they have options to seek support should they struggle.

Mental health and wellness programs not only benefit current employees and aid retention, but can also affect employee recruitment. The next generation of kitchen members are looking for companies that show a vested interest in the wellbeing of their employees and are aware of the mental toll working in a kitchen takes. This will aid our industry in attracting long term members and continuing to improve the environment in which the employees work. Another important

step our industry must take to make the kitchen a healthier space is to address the stigma surrounding mental health and wellness. For decades, both inside and outside the catering industry, there has been a harmful stigma surrounding mental health and illnesses that can deter individuals from seeking help. Providing an environment where employees feel heard and understood can help destigmatize mental health and create an environment where their wellness is taken seriously.

Now that we understand what a healthy kitchen can look like, there are some concrete steps that can be taken to create a healthy kitchen. A good starting point is integrating a mental health and wellness program into your company. Today, there are numerous organizations that are targeted at supporting wellness in the catering industry. A few such organizations are:

- [Culinary Hospitality Outreach Wellness \(CHOW\)](#)
- [Ben's Friends](#)
- [The Burnt Chef Project](#)
- [#Fairkitchens](#)
- [I Got Your Back](#)
- [The Giving Kitchen](#)
- [Restaurant After Hours](#)
- [Focus on Health](#)

These are great organizations to help begin the conversation about mental health in the kitchen. With the support of these organizations and your company, this can lead to the creation of a healthy kitchen. 



Chef Peter McCaffrey is a Senior Consultant at Certified Catering Consultants and Culinary Director of Leading Caterers of America. Chef Peter was for many years a prominent and successful chef/owner of Wine Valley Catering located in the Napa Valley and San Francisco. Clients included Opus One, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mondavi, Google, Yelp, and the City of San Francisco. His company provided F&B services to the prestigious Villagio and Vintage Inn in Yountville, CA. Peter lives in Napa Valley, CA along with his wife and two daughters. He's passionate about mountain biking, yoga and coaching soccer as well as anything related to food and cooking!

FLORIDA SUNSHINE TOUR - 2023



STARRING



catersource® + **THE SPECIAL EVENT®**

MARCH 27-30 • ORLANDO, FL



FEATURING



the **ART** of
CATERING **FOOD**

MARCH 26 & 27 • ORLANDO, FL



WITH SPECIAL
GUESTS

MEETINGSNET

LCA
LEADING CATERERS
OF AMERICA

ACE & GRALA
AWARDS

ICA



SEARCH
FOUNDATION

ILEA
INTERNATIONAL
LIVE EVENTS ASSOCIATION

TICKETS

Catersource-TSE.com



Brought to you by
informaconnect

*
By Amber Kispert



Featured on the cover of this issue of Catersource is “Corn Identity,” a unique concoction featuring bourbon, sweet corn brown sugar syrup, cornhusk tea, and salted cacao bitters. Cheers! —
Amber Kispert

CORN IDENTITY

Recipe and photo courtesy ©Cocktail.Vision2022

INGREDIENTS

2 oz bourbon
1 oz Sweet Corn Brown Sugar Syrup
(recipe below)
1 oz Cornhusk Tea (recipe below)
1 drop Cocktail Vision’s “Butter Me Up”
cocktail perfume
Salted Cacao Bitters
Rim: Chef Rubber’s Super Sweet Corn
Powder

METHOD

Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake to chill and dilute. Double-strain over fresh ice.

INGREDIENTS FOR SWEET CORN BROWN SUGAR SYRUP

½ cup brown sugar
½ cup Chef Rubber’s Super Sweet Corn
Powder
½ cup water
¼ tsp salt

METHOD

In a small saucepan combine all ingredients, stir over medium heat until sugar is completely dissolved. Remove from heat and let cool completely. Strain through a fine mesh and through a coffee filter. Transfer to glass bottle and refrigerate.

INGREDIENTS FOR CORNHUSK TEA

2 ea. cornhusks
½ cup boiling water

METHOD

Combine cornhusks and water in a saucepan, bring to a boil. Simmer for 20 minutes. Let cool completely. Strain through coffee filter. Reserve in refrigerator. 



Wanted: Your Photos

Do you want to be featured on the cover of Catersource in an upcoming issue? We are currently accepting photo submissions for consideration for future publication use.

Take a look through your digital photo albums, solicit photos from colleagues and vendor partners, and share your photos with us!

Submit your photos by clicking here: [Submit Your Photos](#)

A BIG THANKS

TO OUR OUTSTANDING SPEAKERS

Catersource + The Special Event could not offer the unforgettable experience they do for attendees without the support of our generous speakers. We salute them here:

Adrianne Harris
Alan Berg, CSP
Aleya Harris
Alicia Falango
Alicia Schiro
Alisa Walsh, CITP, CIS
Amanda Ma
Amber Anderson
Anthony Lambatos
April Lambatos
Aron Schwartz
Art Menchaca
Aurora Dawn Benton
Barbara Bouman
Barbara Khozam
Barbara Moore
Beth Bracco
Bill Hansen
Bob Pacanovsky
Bobbi Brinkman
Bobby Dutton
Boris Seymore
Brian Acheson, CSEP
Brian Green
Bron Hansboro
Bryce Cherven
Camila Uribe
Carl Sacks
Carley Gauthier
Cathy Hardin
Cayetano Uribe
CeCe Todd
Charessa Sawyer, LMSW, CMP
Chris Dyer
Chris Taylor
Chrissy Thompson, DES
Christie Osborne
Christina Matteucci
Christopher Salem
Christopher Taylor
Chuck Salem
Cindy Cafferty
Cindy Novotny
Claudia Koehler
Clint Elkins
Colbert Callen
Colja Dams
Conner Black
Courtney Hopper
Craig Howard
Craig Tolliver
Cristian Hernandez
Dan Braunstein

Dana Buchanan
Dana Kadwell
David Beahm
David M Lombardo
David McCandless
David Merrell
David Porto
Dean Mistretta
Deanna Johnson
Deborah Elias, CSEP, CMP, CIS
Deborah Thomas, CSEP Emeritus
Derek Woodruff
DuVal Warner
Dwayne Thomas
Elaine Pofeldt
Elise Luna
Elizabeth Sheils
Elle Bronson
Ellyn Nugent
Erika Kulovitz
Erin Branham, CSEP
Ethan Mantle
Fausto Pifferrer
Francesca Lombardo
Freddie Viren
Geoffrey Barker
Grace Gittinger, DES
Graham Anderson
Greg Shapiro
Greg Taylor
Gretchen Culver
Heidi Hughett
Holly Verbeck
Ijaz Jamal
Jaclyn Watson
Jaka Jaiteh
James Auerbach
Jamie Quickert
Jan Levie
Jason Sutton
Jay Varga
Jeanelle Powery
Jeff Haynes
Jeff Ware
Jeffrey Selden
Jen Taylor
Jennie Cook
Jennifer Bertolino
Jennifer Evans
Jennifer Perna
Jennifer Trotter
Jeremy Martorano

Joann Roth-Oseary
Joanne Purnell
John Crisafulli
Jonathan Aymin
Jordan Langer
Joseph Pina
Joshua Feinbloom
Judy Belcher, CSEP
Julia Conway
Julie Novack
Justin Pasha
Kaleigh Wiese
Karen Gordon
Kate Patay
Kate Whelan
Keith Lord
Kevin Bilida
Kevin Brewer
Kevin Dennis
Kirsten Ott Palladino
Kristi DePew
Larry Green
Lauren Chumbley
Leah Weinberg
Lee Anderson
Leilani Baugh
Leslie LaSorsa
Liese Gardner
Lisa Teiger
Liza Roeser
Mackenzie Zeitlin
Margaret Brower
Margaux Fraise
Mark Catuogno
Matt Mitchell
Maxwell Chapman
Meagan O'Flaherty
Meghan Ely
Melissa Tibben
Meredith Commender
Meredith Ryncarz
Meryl Snow
Michael Dwork
Michael Levitt
Michael Stavros
Mike Bicocchi
Molly Crouch
Monique Boyd
Nathaniel Neubauer
Nettie Frank
Nicholas Walker
Nora Sheils
Norm Bennett

Norma Charette
Paige Mejia
Pam Schwartz
Patrick McMichael, CSEP
Paul Buchanan
Paula Mettler
Paulina Corvi
Pauline Parry
Pawnta Shadab, CTA, CIS, CITP
Peggy Kelley
Peter Lentz
Peter McCaffrey
Rahm Fama
Renee Dalo
Renee Sabo
Reuben Bell
Rich Rosendale
Rob Barber
Rob Ferre
Robert Mitchell
Robin Selden
Ron Knoll
Rosemary Renteria-Vera
Roy Choi
Roy Porter
Ruchir Mewawala
Ryan Corvaia
Sam Jacobson
Sarah Noll Wilson
Sean O'Neil
Sebastien David
Shadi Hashemi
Shakira M. Brown
Shannon Jones, CMP
Stella Rankin
Stephanie Jayko
Stephanie Zemler
Steve Sanchez
Suzi McMerty Shands
Syd Sexton
Sylvain Gregoire
Talia Rogers
Terrica Skaggs
Terry Singleton, CSEP, CDMP
Thomas Whelan
Thuy Diep, CGSP, DMCP, CSEP
Tisha Holman
Tomer Grassiani
Tracy Stuckrath
Valerie Rubin
Yinka Freeman
Zoe Moore



BALANCING



THEY'RE EVERYWHERE ON THE INTERNET TODAY: the oddly satisfying images and videos that emphasize the beauty of symmetry. Maybe you've even fell victim to their soothing distraction while updating your social media page only to later realize that it's been nearly an hour. But what is it about these videos and the idea of symmetry that we find so appealing?

According to the American scientist [Alan Lightman](#), human brains actually strive to see things symmetrically. "I would claim that symmetry represents order, and we crave order in this strange universe we find ourselves in," he wrote in *The Accidental Universe: The World You Thought You Knew*. "The search for symmetry, and the emotional pleasure we derive when we find it, must help us make sense of the world around us, just as we find satisfaction in the repetition of the seasons and the reliability of friendships. Symmetry is also economy. Symmetry is simplicity. Symmetry is elegance."

Embracing symmetry can be a very clean way of presenting your food to guests: group like-colored foods together; create clean lines

“SYMMETRY REPRESENTS ORDER
AND WE CRAVE ORDER IN THIS
STRANGE UNIVERSE WE FIND
OURSELVES IN”

— Alan Lightman

FACT



ORDER,
THIS
IND

ghtman

by placing rectangular or square items in parallel and perpendicular forms; place appetizer spoons or boats in a circular formation on a serving tray; and adorn shelves and walls with the same shaped and sized item. The same concept can also apply to décor.

Additionally, symmetry's cousin, repetition, can also be used beautifully in presentation. According to the [Culinary Pro](#): "Strong, clean lines that are vertical, horizontal, or angled, provide neat and logical dimension to the plate. Patterns emerge by repeating these lines, and variety is introduced through intersecting or overlapping lines."

"Since we all eat with our eyes, I go for modern food art that's typically very linear, symmetrical, and intentional," says Robin Selden, executive chef at Marcia Selden Catering & Events. "I originally went to school for design as did my mother, Marcia, so we are very tuned in to the look and presentation of everything we do." —*Amber Kispert*

Photo courtesy Pinch Food Design

STEAL THIS



Fresh ideas to use or adapt at your next event.



▲ Jessie Khaira |
Symmetry and repetition
Photo courtesy Blush Wedding Photography



Marcia Selden Catering & Events | **Symmetry, repetition, and reflection** *Photo courtesy Paul Bickford Photography*



▲ Lisa Dupar Catering | **Symmetry, repetition, and reflection**
Photo courtesy Matthew Land Studios



▲ LUX Catering & Events |
Symmetry, repetition, and reflection
Photo courtesy David Daniels

Marcia Selden Catering & Events | **Symmetry, repetition, and reflection** *Photo courtesy Paul Bickford Photography*



▲ Taste Catering & Event Planning |
Symmetry, repetition, and reflection
Photo courtesy Taste Catering & Event Planning

AS SEEN IN MEMPHIS



Dream Chaser cocktail (Cruzan rum, Ypioca Cachaca, Luxardo, creme de violette, and lemon) at Catherine & Mary's. *Photo courtesy Catherine & Mary's*



In downtown Memphis, Catherine & Mary's **Little Gem Salad**, featuring gem lettuce, green goddess dressing, bravo radish, and coriander panna gratta. *Photo courtesy Catherine & Mary's*



On a recent familiarization trip to Memphis as a guest of LEO Events for Le Bon Appetit (turn to page 12 for more on the charity event), Catersource was able to experience the full spectrum of southern hospitality that calls Memphis home. — *Amber Kispert*

(Left) Catherine & Mary's **rigatoni with maw maw's gravy** (similar to a bolognese), and parmesan. *Photo courtesy Catherine & Mary's*



Rendezvous Famous Seasoning created this rub back in the 1950s and cajun spices he discovered. Seasoning is good on just potatoes, fish, grilled veggie. *Photo courtesy Craig Thompson*



ne & Mary's Caesar salad with romaine,
 , benne seeds, pecorino, and calabrian chili.
 courtesy Catherine & Mary's



oning is the Original "Dry Rub." Founder, Charlie Vergos,
 the 1950s based on his father's unique Greek seasonings
 covered on visits to New Orleans. Rendezvous Famous
 about anything—ribs, chicken, deviled eggs, baked
 pies, bloody marys, popcorn—you name it.
 ompson



Located within Graceland's Exhibition Center is the
Jungle Room Bar, featuring replica furniture of Elvis
 Presley's iconic Jungle Room inside the Graceland
 mansion. Photo courtesy © EPE. Graceland and its
 marks are trademarks of EPE. All Rights Reserved.
 Elvis Presley™ © 2019 ABG EPE IP LLC



The state-of-the-art, 80,000 square foot **Graceland Exhibition Center** is
 adjacent to Elvis Presley's Memphis Entertainment Complex and is home
 to an ever-changing line-up of exploration showcases. The expansive
 complex also features a separate 10,000 square foot space available to
 organizations or individuals to rent for their own one-of-a-kind private
 events. Photo courtesy © EPE. Graceland and its marks are trademarks
 of EPE. All Rights Reserved. Elvis Presley™ © 2019 ABG EPE IP LLC



By Bob Pacanovsky



The Lost Art of Service

There is something wonderful about walking into a venue or banquet room and seeing the signs of a skilled staff: beautifully set tables with everything lined up perfectly; the event staff looking professional, polished, and working seamlessly together as if every move was choreographed; and having confidence in knowing the proper and professional way to serve their guests through the entire meal and event.

Does this “dance” come naturally to your staff?

According to a study by a global event and meeting planner organization, 46% of employees said that quality training programs to learn these types of professional enhancements are an incentive for them to stay with a company. They certainly benefit you as a business owner. Here’s why.

For most of your guests, it’s possible that the only impression they will have of your company is the interaction they have with your front-line ambassadors: your banquet staff, event managers and captains, and culinary staff.

That’s why a dining training program is an essential part of your operations.

The staff in your organization is the best marketing and public relations you have. How they look, act, speak, and serve is a direct reflection of your brand. How your staff carries themselves when representing your company, and how they implement the “art of service” are vitally important in creating memorable events and loyal clients for your company.

What should a dining training program include?

Teaching service excellence

These are the proper techniques and protocols when it comes to dining service, whether for formal or casual events and dinners. This includes, but is not limited to:

- How to properly set a table
- How to serve dinner properly and professionally
- How to professionally clear a guest table
- How to professionally carry a tray of dinner plates into the dining area
- How to professionally pour all beverages—water, coffee, wine, champagne, etc.

Teaching the finer points of hospitality. This is a combination of:

1. Making your clients and guests feel special and important when they are at one of your events. Looking for ways to anticipate their needs, personalize their experience, appreciate and thank them, as well as wow them.
2. Making sure that your staff has the “polish” needed when representing your company at events. How they look, act, and speak can make a big difference in the minds of the clients and guests.

Teaching, implementing, and practicing both service excellence and hospitality is vital.

Today, more than ever, hospitality is a lost art, but you can turn it into a winning combination of engagement, loyalty, and retention for your company. 

Bob Pacanovsky is Chief Hospitality Officer for the Black Tie Experience and a Certified Catering Consultant.



Save the Dates!

catersource® + **THE
SPECIAL
EVENT®**

MARCH 27-30, 2023

ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER • ORLANDO, FL

OR
LAN
DO

conference.catersource.com
thespecialeventshow.com

EXCLUSIVE: Walmart + Chartwells feeds thousands (p. 50)
Monochromatic holiday event wins Gala (p. 42)

SPECIAL EVENTS

FALL 2022

*Get that
Stage!*

**FOCUS ON
FLORALS**

P. 14

**PITCH THE
PERFECT TENT**

P. 32

Creative Ways to Amplify Corporate Branding

Making décor and accessories work for maximum impact.

By CORT Events

Reflect the Company's Mission

Allow a **wellness** or sustainability-focused client to **reinforce their brand identity** by incorporating biophilic touches throughout an event space. Lifelike **greenery** adds touches of nature without the waste. **Wood textures** provides a sense of grounding, even in a crowded venue, to **facilitate relaxed**, candid conversations.

On the other end of the spectrum, it would be remiss to plan a **tech event** without **charging accessories**. Go a step further and place QR codes on **personalized products** for easy informational access.

For **luxury** clients, incorporate **rich textured rugs**, **deep jeweled-toned pillows**, and **mixed metallics** to envelope attendees in opulence.



Think Beyond the Logo

Personalization can be much **more than just** printing a client's logo on a board. Consider going outside of the box and **reinforcing** the client's products and services in different ways. Subtly carry brand colors throughout the event with **custom, thematic graphics** on **light columns, pillows, and soft seating pods** to marry brand amplification with creative design elements.

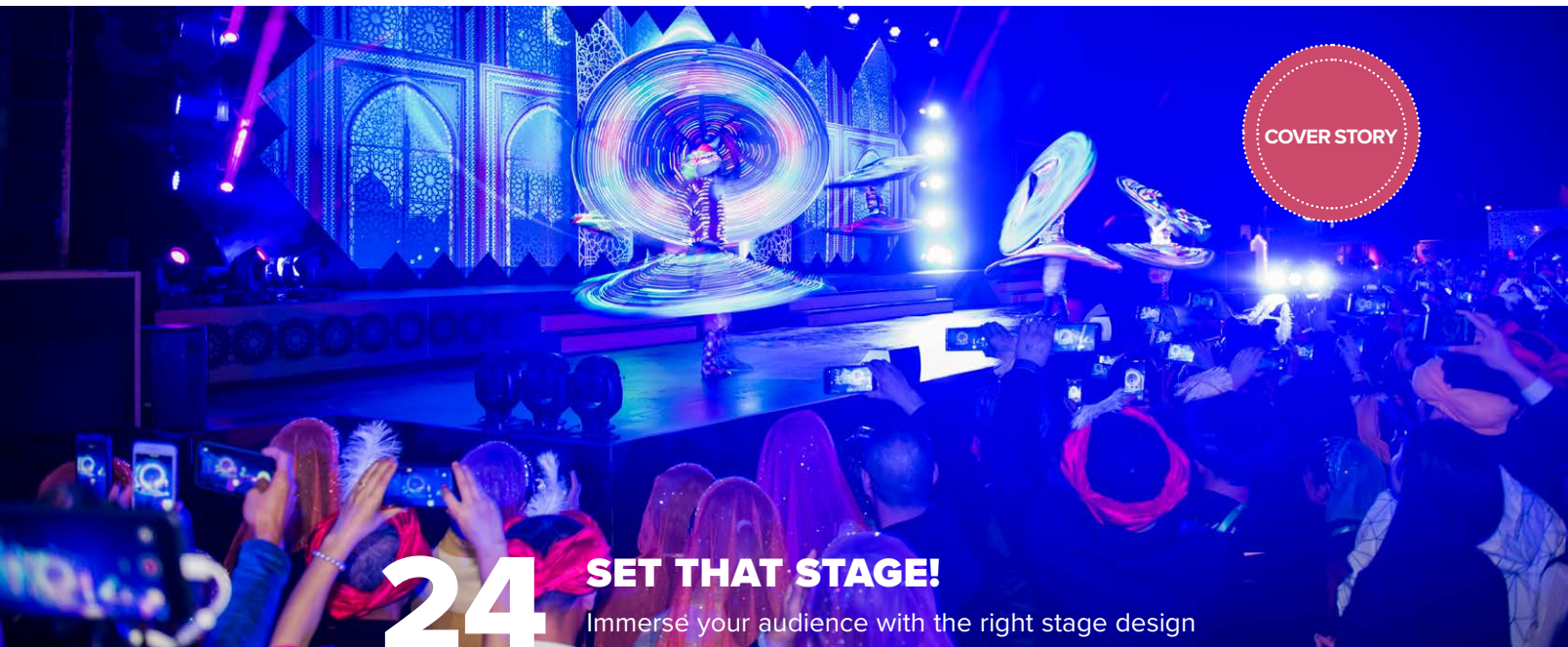
Use Accessories to Foster Connection

Highlight **intelligent design** with well thought out, **functional lighting**. Discern a gathering space with defining hedge walls for a calming effect. Frame a soft seating sanctuary with **geometric wall partitions** for a sense of privacy even in a crowded space.



For more design tips and the latest updates, visit us at cortevents.com.

FALL 2022 THIS ISSUE



COVER STORY

24

SET THAT STAGE!

Immerse your audience with the right stage design



42

On the cover: A raised floral centerpiece featuring hanging teardrop crystals and white roses from industry veteran Valerie Percival's 80th birthday party (By Design Event Group). Photo courtesy Monique Perera, Camera Creations Pty Ltd

COLUMNS

04 Editor's Page

Unsung heroes of the job

58 The Last Word

Liese Gardner talks about how to create a winning Gala Award submission

DEPARTMENTS

08 Conference News

Get the latest information on The Special Event Show 2023

14 Divine Décor

Focus on florals

22 Business of Events

Putting your all into your association as an event business

32 On Trend

Pitch the perfect tent

42 Confetti

Monochromatic Christmas-themed event wins Gala Award

46 Marketing & Media

Prepping for engagement season? Start testing now to put social ads on auto-pilot

48 Tech Talk

How tech supports sales conversions

50 Food for Fetes

Chartwells feeds thousands at multi-day event

54 As Seen In...

Memphis



EDITOR'S PAGE

HOW DO YOU REWARD?

The first time I was called an unsung hero, I literally didn't know what it meant. I was 17 years old and one of many actors on a high school stage. Certainly not the lead, not by any stretch. Yet, I was called out by name in a review as an "unsung hero" of the production. I had to look it up. Unsung hero. *Someone who has provided a great benefit or has done great work but did not receive the credit or recognition they deserve.* It really gave me pause, and it sort of became the soundtrack of my career. But I think everyone feels that way at times.

People like to be recognized; studies have certainly shown that to be true. Money, job flexibility, experiences, even to just be heard. I think we are all struggling with ways to show our appreciation for those employees who fly under the radar, who we rely on to always do their best, who we trust will not disappoint us...and then we inevitably let them down when we don't remember to thank them properly. Same goes with us managers. It's not any different. We aren't always thanked for being good supervisors or good whatever.

I received a call from a 2022 speaker a few weeks ago, disappointed in the (non) coverage they received in this magazine re: the material they had presented at the show. All that coverage we wrote up and not a whisper about or photo of them. They'd put a lot of effort into their presentation and they had not received public recognition for it. It made me feel terrible that they felt this way because I know how much conference attendees benefitted from their knowledge.

When I fill the session slots at Catersource + The Special Event, you could look at it as if I am casting any stage play or musical, be it my keynotes (the leads), featured speakers (their co-stars), and finally the breakout speakers (supporting cast). Clearly, the keynotes get a lot of attention in a post-show write up, as do the featured speakers. But it's those supporting cast members that often get overlooked. Why? Supporting players will make or break any show, any event, any—anything! Think about a great Broadway musical, where the leading lady is being held aloft sideways by a dozen pair of hands. Supporting. Being uplifted as she sings that showstopper. Without the supporting cast holding her up there, she's just a pile of sequins on the floor.

More effort, beyond a bi-weekly paycheck, needs to be made toward acknowledging the efforts of all our cast members, no matter the part they play in your show or the proximity they are to a home office.

I'd like to turn your attention to page 06 where we thank our contributing writers and also where we list the names of everyone who worked on this issue. As for our 2022 Catersource + The Special Event breakout, keynote, and featured speakers, please turn to page 56. I wish I could do more; but I promise I'll do better in 2023. Finally, thank you for reading this issue. It's always a pleasure to write for you.

Kathleen

Kathleen Stoehr
Director of Community & Content Strategy

OUR ADVISORY BOARD

- Mark Baltazar / Broadstreet
New York
- Janice Blackmon / Janice Blackmon Events
Atlanta
- Cindy Brewer, CMP, DMCP / LEO Events
Memphis, Tenn.
- David Buckley, CSEP / Marbella Event Furniture and Decor Rental
Pennsauken, N.J.
- Patrick Cuccaro / Affairs to Remember
Atlanta
- Tracie Domino / Tracie Domino Events
Tampa, Fla.
- Craig Erlich / George P. Johnson Co.
Detroit
- Anne Finzer / CEO Corporate Event Organization
Edmonton, Alberta
- Andrew Gerstel / Windows Catering Co.
Alexandria, Va.
- David Granger, CSEP / Perot Museum of Nature and Science
Dallas
- Karl Heitz, CSEP, DMCP / Prologis
Denver
- L. Gene Huddleson / Detail + Design
Indianapolis
- Aaron Kaufman, CSEP / Fifth Element Group
Toronto
- Caroline Lett / University of Southern California
Los Angeles
- La Randa Mayes / Supreme Court of the United States
Washington
- Amil Mendez / Rayne Events
Crofton, Md.
- Kathy Newby, CERP / Abbey Party Rents SF
San Francisco
- Pam Patsavas, CSEP / Freeman Co.
Chicago
- Jen Poyer, CSEP / Catalina Island Conservancy
Long Beach, Calif.
- Rena Puebla / Coast Concierge Service
Costa Mesa, Calif.
- Robin Selden / Marcia Selden Catering and Event Planning
Stamford, Conn.
- Alison Silcoff / Alison Silcoff Events
Montreal
- J. Wilbur Smith / Eventscapes
Atlanta
- Debbie Wood / Debbie Wood and Associates
Tyler, Texas



FOLIO LUCIA



D.W. HABER
BUFFET SERVICE



D.W. HABER FUSION BUFFET SYSTEM



ROBERT GORDON
FORAGER



VARICK
LISSOME GOLD

RSS Distributors is proud to partner with Steelite International, the world leading manufacturer & supplier of tabletop, buffet products and lighting solutions for the hospitality industry.

Wholesale Specialists to the Events Industry since 1967
WWW.RSSD.COM • 1-800-233-0175 • orders@rssd.com



Fall 2022 THIS ISSUE

CONTRIBUTORS



Marketing maestro **Christie Osborne** offers the keys to testing social ads pre-engagement season.



Tech guru **Elizabeth Sheils** explains how technology supports sales conversions.



Industry veteran **Kevin Dennis** shares tips to make the most of your association membership.



Communications expert and previous Gala Awards judge **Liese Gardner** advises how to create an eye-catching award submission.

Special Events®, Volume 41 No. 3 (ISSN 1079-1264), is published by Informa Connect, 605 Third Ave., 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10158 (informa.com). Canadian GST#R126431964. Additional resources, including subscription request forms and an editorial calendar, are available at specialevents.com. EDITORIAL OFFICE: 10231 Zenith Lane, Minneapolis, MN 55431, USA. SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Free to qualified subscribers. PRIVACY POLICY: Your privacy is a priority to us. For a detailed policy statement about privacy and information dissemination practices related to Informa Connect products, please visit our website at informa.com. CORPORATE OFFICE: Informa Connect, 605 Third Ave., 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10158. COPYRIGHT 2022 Informa Connect. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

www.specialevents.com

SPECIAL EVENTS

Editorial Office: 10231 Zenith Lane, Minneapolis, MN 55431
phone 612/757-9153

The Special Event + Catersource
Winner of awards from the American Society of Business Publication Editors
and the Western Publications Association

Also publishers of *MeetingsNet* and *Catersource* magazines

Director of Community & Content Strategy Kathleen Stoehr, kathleen.stoehr@informa.com
Content Producer Amber Kispert, amber.kispert@informa.com
Content Editor Amanda Nicklaus, amanda.nicklaus@informa.com
Art Director Sharon Carlson, sharon.carlson@informa.com
Managing Director Melissa Fromento, melissa.fromento@informa.com
Sales Account Executive Kevin Hacke, kevin.hacke@informa.com
Sales Account Executive Bonnie Rayfield-Warg, bonnie.rayfield-warg@informa.com
Managing Director, Informa Connect, New York Aharon Shamash, aharon.shamash@informa.com
Group Show Director Tara Melingonis, tara.melingonis@informa.com
Show Manager Jesse Parziale, jesse.parziale@informa.com
Sponsorship Coordinator Danielle Castro, danielle.castro@informa.com
Production Manager Denise Walde, denise.walde@informa.com
Senior Director, User Marketing Desiree Torres, desiree.torres@informa.com
Customer Service 866/505-7173 (USA) or 847/763-9504 (outside USA)
Customer Service List Rental Rosalie Garcia, rosalie.garcia@informa.com; 212/204-4358
Reprints/Content Licensing Wright's Media, 877/652-5295, informa@wrightsmedia.com



SPECIAL EVENTS MAGAZINE, an informa business, is devoted to rental operators, planners, caterers, dealers, manufacturers and others involved in the planning, staging or supplying of special events. Written permission must be obtained for the reproduction of any material, in whole or in part, appearing in this issue. Send address changes or requests to Special Events magazine, 605 Third Avenue, 22nd Floor, New York, New York 10158, USA. © 2022 (by) Informa Connect All Rights Reserved.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
CATERING AND EVENTS

IMEX America

Come to the one that gets it done

When reserves are low, hours are long and budgets are tight, you want maximum bang for your buck.

That's what IMEX America delivers.

It's the show where you can get all this done:

- ✓ Business
- ✓ Networking
- ✓ Learning
- ✓ Listening
- ✓ Meeting
- ✓ Negotiating
- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Expanding
- ✓ Partnering
- ✓ Innovating
- ✓ Recruiting
- ✓ Launching

If you're in the business of events, meetings or incentive programs, be they core to your company or something you do once a year, IMEX America is the place to be.

**Cost? No charge. Your ticket's on us.
Value for money? Let's call it priceless.**

Register today at imexamerica.com



imex **LAS VEGAS** MANDALAY BAY
america OCTOBER 11-13, 2022

CONFERENCE NEWS

by Kathleen Stoehr



Conference updates

Events & catering industries converge in Orlando for the Florida Sunshine Tour!

The last week of March 2023 in Orlando, Fla. will be a hot one when Catersource + The Special Event's Florida Sunshine Tour lands starting on March 26 with opening day of the Art of Catering Food. With so much happening in one place for one week, it was absolutely appropriate to give this industry gathering—this industry week!—a beautiful sunshiny theme. So, what's happening and who will be there? *Here's a look:*

catersource® + THE SPECIAL EVENT®

MARCH 27-30, 2023 • ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Sunday & Monday, March 26 & 27: Art of Catering Food (AOCF), produced in conjunction with the International Caterers Association, will bring exclusive culinary training, trends, ingredients, and techniques taught by successful chefs throughout the catering industry. Tastings, tours, round robins, and lunch and learns are a big part of this two-day event. This conference is best for chefs, owners, and anyone interested in a two-day culinary immersion.

Monday, March 27: Leading Caterers of America full day meeting. This members-only consortium of the top event and catering companies in the U.S. and Canada will gather for a one-day intensive assemblage to exchange ideas and discuss strategies regarding how to build their businesses ever higher.

Monday, March 27: Catersource + The Special Event "soft opens" with its Connect Live evening event, a chance for those already checked in and ready to engage to join together and kick off the week. It's a great evening, spirits are high, and the week is wide open with possibility

FLORIDA SUNSHINE TOUR - 2023



STARRING



catersource® + **THE SPECIAL EVENT®**

MARCH 27-30 • ORLANDO, FL



FEATURING



the **ART** of
CATERING **FOOD**

MARCH 26 & 27 • ORLANDO, FL



WITH SPECIAL
GUESTS

MEETINGSNET

LCA
LEADING CATERERS
OF AMERICA

ACE & GRALA
AWARDS

ICA



SEARCH
FOUNDATION

ILEA
INTERNATIONAL
LIVE EVENTS ASSOCIATION

TICKETS

Catersource-TSE.com



Brought to you by
informaconnect

CONFERENCE NEWS (CONTINUED)

for networking and interaction. This reception with small bites and big entertainment is sure to please everyone.

Tuesday, March 28: Catersource + The Special Event opens, with a conference-only first day and an opening night event. It also welcomes its sister media brand, MeetingsNet, presenting its first-ever conference track, available to those who purchase a TSE pass. The

MEETINGSNET

International Live Events Association (ILEA) will also offer a track for those looking for CSEP certification, again, only available to those who purchase a TSE-only or All Access pass.

Be sure to visit our new Experience rooms on the second floor, too. More on that in our winter issue.

After the conference closes for the day at 5:00 p.m., groups such as International Caterers Association Educational Foundation (ICAEF) will celebrate its scholarship recipients in a private gathering; various exhibitors will host invitation-only events; and then the evening will culminate in the high energy Opening Night Event, produced by event chairs Selina Mullenax, CORT & Gabby Mourino, Imprint Group.

Wednesday, March 29:

An Opening General Session launches a full day of activity on the exhibit hall floor (open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) including conference sessions on the Ignite and Keynote stages. There will, as always, be hundreds of exhibitors to visit, experience, and learn from.

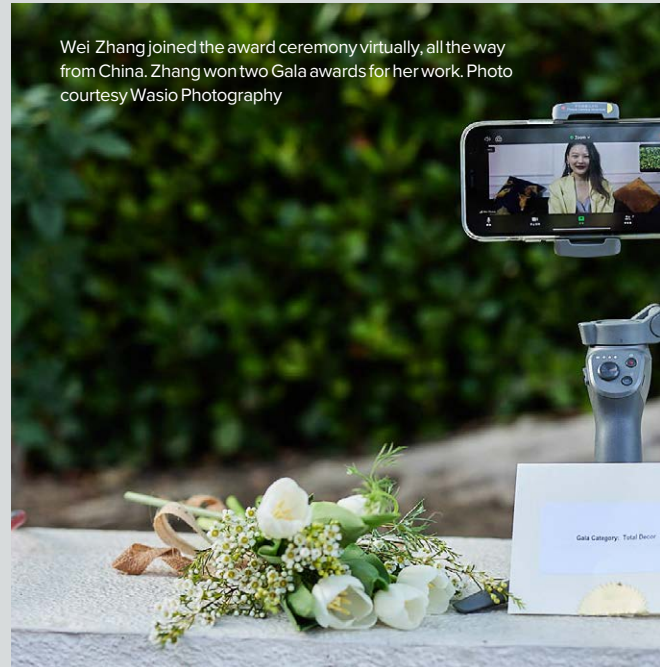
In the afternoon, additional sessions in conference rooms begin at 1:00 p.m. and end at 5:00 p.m.

Later in the evening the annual Special Event Assistance, Relief & Crisis Help (SEARCH) Foundation fundraiser will bring like-minded people together to raise money through auction for those in need. A spectacular charitable event, The Special Event is a proud donor and hopes to see you there! Additional activities for attendees are in planning stages, we will keep you updated as we get closer.

Thursday, March 30:

Always known to go big on its last day, Catersource + The Special Event will offer a 9:00 a.m. Closing General Session that will inspire you, another full day of exhibit hall browsing and buying (10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.), the fabulous Leadership Lunch at the incredible Dr. Phillips Center celebrating the movers and shakers of the events and catering industries (11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.), a cocktail reception (2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.), more conference education (ending at 4:00 p.m.), and then the big KABOOM! You'll start the night off with the "Oscars" of

Wei Zhang joined the award ceremony virtually, all the way from China. Zhang won two Gala awards for her work. Photo courtesy Wasio Photography



AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

It's once again time to celebrate the best of the best! Nominations are now being accepted for the Special Events 2023 Gala awards! We invite you to submit your best work from the past year. Join in the excitement and the spirit of our industry as we celebrate the hard work and exceptional accomplishments of our peers.

This year's Gala awards will be like no other since you can now enter brand new categories, and the application process has been made easier with the elimination of providing the client's budget.



Deborah Elias of Elias Events winning a Gala Award. Photo Courtesy Wasio Photography



David Merrell and Lenny Talarico celebrate with a photo together after receiving Gala Awards. Photo courtesy Wasio Photography

ACE & Gala

A W A R D S

This year's new categories include:

Designer of the Year

This award is presented to the company, whose design work has been exceptional in all aspects throughout the year. Events of any size or type executed within the United States of America will be considered.

Best Fundraising or Nonprofit Event

Must include both gross and net money raised, in U.S. dollars. Client must be a registered nonprofit.

Micro Event of the Year

A micro event is defined as an event for 50 guests or fewer, that stands out as extraordinary and innovative.

Virtual or Hybrid Event of the Year

The event must include some type of virtual element.

Sustainability in Events

Events must place a keen eye on sustainability, (i.e., zero waste, diversity, equity & inclusion, etc.).

To submit an entry to this year's Gala awards and see the full list of categories, please visit our awards portal at <https://ace-gala.awardsplatform.com/>

Important Dates

- Jan. 1st, 2022–Nov. 30, 2022 | Eligibility Period for Entries
- Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2022 | Regular submission deadline (\$99 fee)
- Thursday, Dec. 15, 2022 | Late Bird submission deadline (\$160 fee)

the industry: An elaborate awards ceremony featuring the Gala, ACE, and CATIE awards with pre-show cocktail reception and exciting awards presentation for work exceptionally well done (see previous page for more information on the Gala awards).

After that, join award recipients and exhibitors, sponsors, speakers, and attendees for one last industry week hurrah as we say farewell at our Closing Night Event, chaired by the ever-delightful Chef Boris Seymore of BDS Catering & Productions.

ALL OF THE OTHER GOOD STUFF

Registration:

Registration is scheduled to open the week of September 26! Take advantage of the lowest prices available and enjoy exclusive access to webinars, virtual events, networking meetups, award nominee and session sneak peeks, and other exciting show-related niblets that only registered attendees can receive. If you want the inside scoop before the show so you arrive in the know, head over to <http://catersource-tse.com> to review pricing packages.

Certification opportunities:

We at *Special Events* are pleased to announce that we will partner once again with ILEA to bring CSEP (Certified Special

Events Professional) certification back into the fold, as well as continuing with CMP (Certified Meeting Professional) certification for most classes through The Events Industry Council. As other partnership and certification opportunities arise, we will keep you abreast.

Virtual events: Each month, beginning in October, we will offer a virtual event that will offer a taste of what is to come in March in Orlando. Be sure to watch your inbox for information on upcoming sessions, featuring some of the brightest names in events and catering. Upcoming dates include October 11, November, 08, and December 06, 2022. Our industry week is just too big to contain, right?!

Call for speakers: Our call for session speakers is closed and the full educational schedule will launch after the new year, but we will begin to tease out sessions beginning in November 2022. Right now, go to thespecialeventshow.com to view evening event information and a few of our premier sessions. We are excited to be able to bring you the best and brightest in live education! ●



MODERN
EVENT
FURNITURE

MODERNEVENTFURNITURE.COM

NORTH AMERICAN MANUFACTURING COMING 2023

The premier awards recognizing
the finest work in catering &
special events worldwide

catersource® + THE SPECIAL
EVENT®

ACE & Gala

A W A R D S

Start working on your entries today!
Deadline: November 30, 2022



The ACE and Gala Awards will be presented
during Catersource + The Special Event,
March 27-30 in Orlando, Florida.

Find all the details at
ace-gala.awardsplatform.com

catersource®

SPECIAL
EVENTS

SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN
SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK
SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATER
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING
THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVEN
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. TH
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY BEST V
& SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATER
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING
THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL E
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EV
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVEN
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
BEST WORK IN CATERING &
THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WOF
SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN C
EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPE
VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EV
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WO
SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN C
EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & SP
VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL E
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST
& SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK I
SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATER
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERIN
EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & S
THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPEC
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVEN
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. TH
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST V
& SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK
SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CAT
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERI
EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & S
THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL E
THE BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPEC
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EV
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVE
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS
WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VE
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VE
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. TH
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECI
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VER
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CAT
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE VER
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CAT
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CAT
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V
CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE BEST WORK IN CAT
EVENTS. THE VERY BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL
BEST WORK IN CATERING & SPECIAL EVENTS. THE V

For a Blooming Event, Focus on *Florals*

By Amanda Nicklaus

Even a simple arch twined in roses and tucked into a grove of trees creates an elegant, romantic effect. Event by Jaclyn Watson Events. Photo courtesy JAG Studios

Floral displays have a way of bringing fresh energy and life to an event. "With the ceremony décor as an incredible focal point, it's all about the florals," says expert event planner Brian Green (ByBrianGreen). Using bold, bright colors, floral trends are headed in the direction of dichotomy, whether through a large statement piece or a simple, minimalist arrangement. Take inspiration from these trends and creative uses of florals to make your next event blossom.

FLORAL STATEMENT ARCHES

During *What's Trending in Floral Design?* (held as part of The Special Event in Anaheim, Calif.), Derek Woodruff (Syndicate Sales) and Liza Roeser (FiftyFlowers) emphasized the impact of a statement piece. Green echoed the effect of this trend in his session *2022/2023 Global Wedding Trends*, saying that these massive pieces can be reused throughout wedding festivities, from the ceremony to the party and beyond. Floral-wrapped arches, chuppahs, and structures can be used over catering tables, over entrances welcoming guests, or wherever your event needs to draw eyes and wow the crowd. Bonus point: use your statement piece throughout multiple stages of the event.



Bright red bougainvillea clung to a geometric structure that stood over the bar at the 24 Carrots Catering & Events Fandango! Alta California event. Photo courtesy Annie White Photography



A flowing Sikh Mandap made of white chignon adorned with pink and white roses and pink peonies. Event by Niden Gezer of Nilyum Event Design. Photo courtesy Osmanghani Photography



(Left) Muted oranges work well with this short and wide metallic vessel in this sophisticated centerpiece. Event Jaclyn Watson Events. Photo courtesy Pogo Photo

MAXIMALIST OR MINIMALIST CENTERPIECES

Woodruff and Roeser discussed the dichotomy of client preferences for 2022, noting that arrangements are either extravagant or simple. From single-bud low-key vases and short, sprawling tablescapes to cascading arrangements and even pieces that sit on legs above the tabletop, centerpieces create an elegant yet energetic mood for any event.



(Above) A compact centerpiece with white florals and greenery accents, held in a vessel styled with mercury glass and amber hue candle holders with sustainable LED candles to provide rich texture and muted lighting. Event by Destination Concepts. Photo courtesy Destination Concepts.



(Left) Dripping floral ceiling treatments matched the elevated tabletop centerpiece arrangements in a stunning array of white, crystal, and silver at this dazzling birthday party. Event by By Design Event Group. Photo courtesy Monique Perera, Camera Creations Pty Ltd

Pastel mixed florals sitting on
draping greenery are raised to
eye level and contrasted by a line
of similar flowers across the table.
Event by Jaclyn Watson Events.
Photo courtesy Rodeo & Co



Streaming ceiling floral arrangements use floor-supports in a venue with no hanging points. Event by By Design Event Group. Photo courtesy Monique Perera, Camera Creations Pty Ltd





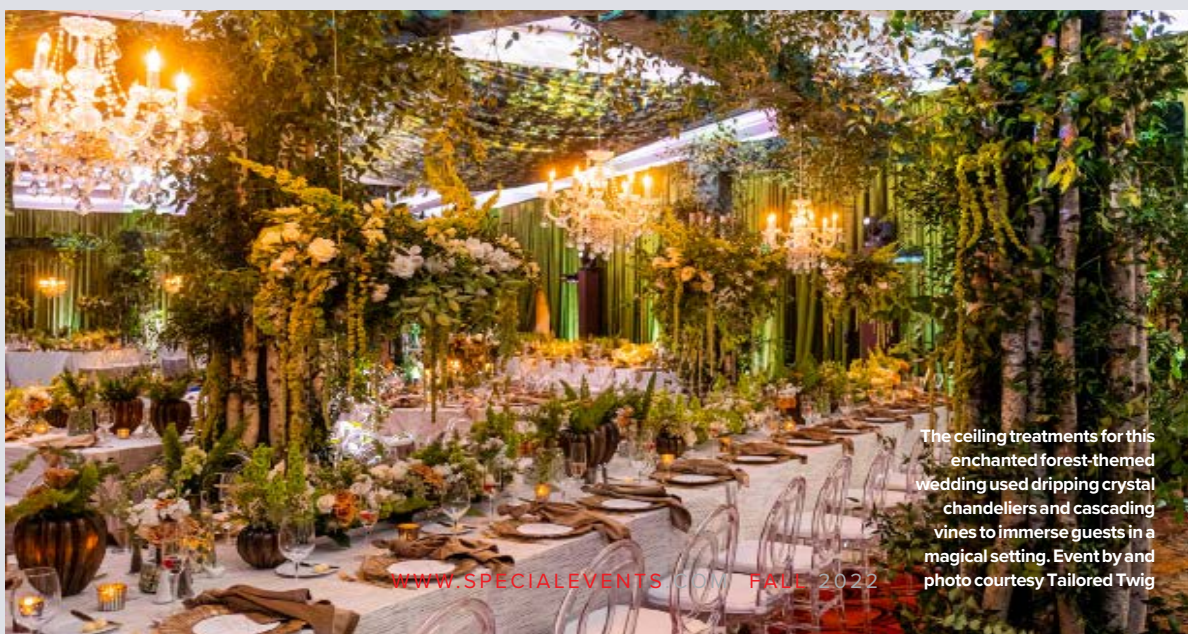
A chandelier of white roses showers a couple for their wedding ceremony. Event by Jessie Khaira. Photo courtesy Blush Wedding Photography

DRIPPING FLORAL CEILING TREATMENTS

Post-pandemic event designs aim to transform the space from floor to ceiling, so consider the way you can use florals to turn a plain ceiling into a garden. “As everyone knows, ceiling treatments have gone through the roof,” says Green. Don’t be hesitant to fill every inch of ceiling with flowers and greens.



A hanging arrangement with draping greenery, emphasized with red and white flowers and lowered light bulbs. Event by Blue Elephant Catering. Photo courtesy Focus Photography



The ceiling treatments for this enchanted forest-themed wedding used dripping crystal chandeliers and cascading vines to immerse guests in a magical setting. Event by and photo courtesy Tailored Twig

FLORAL SUSTAINABILITY

Event sustainability can target all areas of the industry, including florals. To improve floral sustainability, create sustainable systems by examining every step of the process to check for environmental care. Start by considering your own practices and products to check for waste and identifying what products can be reused and which steps can be skipped. Use products that are locally sourced and in season.

Not only can you check for waste throughout your process; check for ways to prevent waste after events. Consider working with clients to donate used flowers after their events in order to get the most use possible from the products of the earth. You can also donate arrangements to women's shelters, children's hospitals, nursing homes, and recycled flower organizations like [Petals for Hope](#).

Next, work backward to evaluate each step of bringing a flower from the ground to your event. FiftyFlowers CEO Liza Roeser encourages interviewing your distributors to ensure they source their products sustainably, as well as seeing that they follow environmentally-friendly procedures. Learn about the farms your products are sourced from to ensure plants are grown in a way that nourishes the earth instead of exploiting the soil. Thinking about your business as part of a cycle, instead of a line that ends up in waste after your event, is the best way to ensure you're participating in sustainable practices that will continue long-term.

Happiness, peace, and romance were symbolized with pink roses, which were set with intense white gypsophila flowers to create a romantic trip down the aisle. Event by Jessie Khaira. Photo courtesy Blush Wedding Photography



NEW BLOOMS

Keeping arrangements creative is a skill but having new products to freshen up your style helps. Here are some of the trendiest blooms making their way into the market, according to Derek Woodruff of Syndicate Sales and Liza Roeser of FiftyFlowers, who spoke at a floral trends session at The Special Event 2022.



Hybrid delphinium



Neve gypsophila



Pennycress



Pasta gerbera



New tulips



Rose



(Left) Enlarged photos of a bat mitzvah guest of honor uses live florals for a fun energetic touch. Event by Star Trax Events. Photo courtesy Diane Scafone Photography

(Below) A golden bust wears a smattering of colorful roses in a unique artistic arrangement. Event by the Detroit Athletic Club. Photo courtesy Sherri Perez

GETTING CREATIVE

There's no hard-and-fast rules to incorporating florals into your event; even as furniture and lighting trends start taking the main stage, there are plenty of ways to sneak flowers into unexpected places. Adding pops of color in corners, signs, photos, and anywhere else you can imagine adds energy and elegance to the space. ●



Lilies



Thumb
Amaranthus



Pon Pon
ranunculus



Nigella pods



Cremons



Paper daisies



Putting Your All Into Your Association as an Event Business



By Kevin Dennis

Association membership is a valuable way to access industry education, grow your network, increase brand awareness, and take advantage of leadership opportunities. But if you aren't maximizing your presence, you won't get much in return beyond a receipt for annual dues and a logo to add to your website.

Joining an association is exciting, and it's common to dive headfirst into all the special events and resources. But the true value comes after sustained participation—when you're no longer a newbie, but an established member influencing the future of your chapter. Carving out your role takes time and dedication, but it's well worth the growth opportunities that open up with consistent involvement.

If you're looking to make the most of your membership, follow these four steps and remember that you will only gain as much as you are willing to give.

ATTEND AS MANY EVENTS AS POSSIBLE

Your dues pay for chapter events, so try to show up for as many as possible to get the full bang for your buck! Return on investment aside, regular attendance allows you to meet more people and make a name for yourself within the chapter. If you intend to pursue a leadership role someday, you'll need your fellow members' support (and votes), so commit to showing up and putting in the face time.

OFFER YOUR TALENTS

Once you've gotten the lay of the land, consider contributing your products or services for an upcoming event. For instance, if you run a venue, you could host a meeting. Caterers can provide lunch, bakers can set up a dessert display, and florists can make centerpiece arrangements for the event. You have a lot to share! Not only will you demonstrate your willingness to lend a helping hand, but you'll also put a spotlight on your offerings in front of people in a position to refer your business!

TURN CONVERSATIONS INTO RELATIONSHIPS

Networking is one of the most valuable takeaways from association membership, but you have to put in the time to see results. While meeting and greeting other members is a must, it's only the first step to building a network of meaningful relationships. Don't let those connections remain once-a-month meetups—take them outside of the association! Small actions, like engaging on social media, inviting them to grab coffee, and sending referrals, can add up to mutually beneficial relationships that evolve into lifelong friendships.

SIGN UP FOR A COMMITTEE

If you're ready to take your participation to the next level, consider offering your time and expertise to a committee. Think



Industry associations can serve as a launching pad for your personal brand and your businesses' growth, **but you must give it your all to see the full value.**

about how you can leverage your skills to support the growth of your chapter. For example, if you're a brilliant salesperson, you'd likely do well helping to promote membership! Or, if you have an extensive national network, you maybe could use your connections to plan programs and education. Your experience is valuable, and stepping up to a committee is a great way to position yourself for future leadership roles.

Industry associations can serve as a launching pad for your personal

brand and your businesses' growth, but you must give it your all to see the full value. Show up, be a team player, and focus on building purposeful relationships! ●

Kevin Dennis is the editor of *WeddingIQ* and the owner of *Fantasy Sound Event Services*, a full-service event company based in Livermore, California. Dennis is the current international president for WIPA.

Get that Stage!



**Immerse your audience with
the right stage design**

By Amanda Nicklaus

Visual and audio effects transformed the nCino nSight conference to captivate attendees. Photo courtesy The Special Event Company



By focusing on theatrical moments, you can create high-impact memory-making features that the audience will absorb and remember.

LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION!

An audience of software conference attendees watches a presentation begin in a slightly dull, straightforward corporate manner. The room is dark. Slides loop on the screen. *We've seen this before.* Suddenly, a whooshing noise draws eyes upward. Colorful lights illuminate overhead and begin flowing toward the stage. The presentation has taken a turn and the audience is immersed in the action: 60-foot LED screens draw eyes across the room; wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling lighting and sound capture the attention of the audience; a thrust stage juts into the audience and the speakers walk into the seating area like Mick Jagger on a rock 'n roll catwalk. This is no longer a simple corporate presentation but an immersive experience.

This real-life production of nCino's nSight conference programming demonstrates how the right approach to stage design can make or break an event. From your technology to your team, there are certain aspects of stage, sound, and lighting design that must be incorporated to create a show that audiences will be talking about for months.

PREPARATION AND PRE-VISUALIZATION

In a post-pandemic world, however, creating an over-the-top elaborate stage production is not always possible. In 2022 and beyond, taking events case-

by-case and assessing whether to scale back is crucial. Joy Matheny, Senior Producer and Marketing Manager for The Special Event Company (TSEC), who produced nSight, knows that event planners can't necessarily keep up with client demands.

"People are coming back and wanting to have events with a vengeance," she says.

In order to create a successful production, it's key to check expectations with clients, vendors, and your own team. Hunter Gray, TSEC's Vice President, says the team presented multiple versions of the event and surveyed their team to check expectations against their schedule.

"Is it worth spending the extra money to accomplish something that we think is going to be difficult on the timeline we have?"

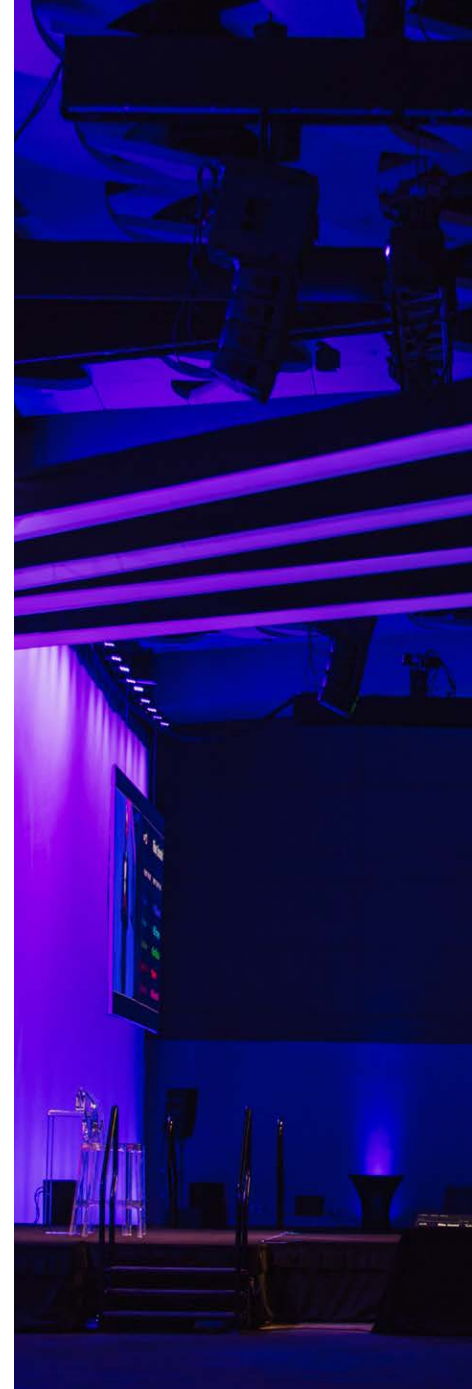
Gray says the goal is to create an incredible event and not necessarily get lost in the details. Funneling time, energy, and resources into creating quality over quantity can save you from getting in over your head.

Scaling back to focus on what Gray calls "surprising awe moments" can deliver the same outcome as splurging on every detail, if done properly. Create a strong opening sequence or choose one area to pour intent into—for this event, they chose dramatic transitions that utilized sweeping color changes with the brand's palette. By focusing on theatrical moments, you can create high-impact memory-making features that the audience will absorb and remember.

Creating a solid production plan and



A thrust stage at nSight allowed confident speakers to walk into the audience, immersing attendees in the experience and connecting them to the speakers. Photo courtesy The Special Event Company



Floor-to-ceiling white screens and overhead columns at nCino's nSight conference allowed changing colors to shift the mood of the room. Photo courtesy The Special Event Company



WWW.SPECIALEVENTS.COM FALL 2022

working out the kinks is a lot of time and stress on your stage, planning for creating a themed concert other effects are important. Suzanne Down, Founder of Berzerk, says that she organizes "Pinterest, CAD drawing, Google folders" to start looking and inspirations. design details have been production schedule and track with your goals.

One step that is often is pre-visualization, but



LED columns and overhead lights guided audience eyes upward and toward the stage during the opening presentation of nCino's nSight conference. Photo courtesy The Special Event Company

in pre-production will save during the event. Designing for your site constraints, concept, and organizing AV and other parts of pre-production. Producer and Producer of Cirque often uses mood boards, sketches, and “lots of shared” in creating a concept and share between teams. Once the concept is fleshed out, creating a solid budget will keep you on

left out of stage planning that Gray says that this was the

most critical part of their success with nSight. Since many long-time professionals have left the industry post-COVID, it was important to assemble the team ahead of time and test how everything came together before even going to the venue. Gathering the lighting designer, creative director, tech director, script, and sample assets of everything used in the show and putting them to the test allowed the team to refine and perfect their design so that when they showed up to rehearsal, they were left with only a few manageable items to tweak.

“It’s much more cost-effective to have a small group of designer operators in a room for three days than it is to pay for a crew of twenty, thirty people on site for programming,” says Gray.

USING TECHNOLOGY FOR DRAMATIC EFFECTS

A long arcing trend, immersive events are popular as ever. Gray describes avoiding a 2D stage set, where everything happens on a simple stage, preferring a 3D show that utilizes the entire room and wraps around the audience. LED columns and overhead lights can guide the audience’s attention as well as the programming, such as during transitions, and to focus an audience’s attention on which part of the stage to watch. Audio cues can also move eyes around the room, so no one misses dramatic moments. For nSight, TSEC used massive LED screens to treat everything upstage like a massive white cyclorama,

putting the focus on the speakers while colors around the room shifted the audience's mood.

Down echoes the importance of immersion: "Proximity to the audience is a significant consideration. I find that the more you can break the fourth wall and have the audience feel immersed in what's happening around them, the easier it is to bring your audience on the journey with you."

Beyond immersion, there are myriad types of technology to create dramatic effects. Down says she approaches any show design with two questions, one of which is, "What are the technical requirements needed to best support the acrobatic, cirque, or dance performances we are bringing?" Down advises choosing only a few theatrical elements to focus on: "Know when less is more. Resist the urge to use that special stage effect too much. Effects like ground fog, pyro, rain curtains, cryo blasts, etc., are much more effective when used sparingly."

Down says that stage design and technological effects should be a supporting factor for your overall narrative. "Make it interesting: I love an unconventional stage design. Make sure it supports what is going on from a technical standpoint; consider stability, stage surface, and vertical clearance to the lighting grid. Make sure you have enough clear space. I love integrating fun stage effects (like pyrotechnics), but make sure the effects support the story you are telling."

Focusing on only a few over-the-top techniques can also help you when you run into challenges—and run into challenges you will. Gray advises preparing for variables you know you won't be able to control... ones that you usually find once you're on-site—and even mid-programming.

"Inevitably things will fail," says Gray. "Know when one is none and two is one."

Have a backup plan for every element of design: multiple rigging

--continued on page 31--





Confetti rains down on the crowd at the finale of the Beauty Envision Awards. Photo courtesy K. Garibay



Solid Teams in a Post-pandemic Industry

The pandemic caused many long-time industry experts to leave their professions or switch roles, and those that stayed are in high demand. That means that you won't necessarily be able to hire someone just because you trust their decades of experience. You'll likely have to practice vulnerability in re-building trusted relationships. Hiring someone will be based more on their personality and ability to communicate and learn, versus prioritizing their impressive resume.

"We have to learn how to dance together again. Choreography is what it's all about," says Hunter Gray of The Special Event Company. "A lot of these companies don't look anything like what they looked like before, so we need to figure out how to dance again. It's as simple as that."

Gray advises approaching all the team leads and ensuring you know what they need to be successful, but also where their weaknesses lie. Let them know that it's okay to make mistakes—the point is for everyone to come together to problem-solve quickly.

Suzanne Down of Cirque Berzerk recalls how her team came to the rescue at the BEA Awards, when the venue cancelled their aerial act last-minute. Instead of letting disappointment get in the way, the team redesigned the dramatics and "stayed in solution mode," as Down put it, to replace the aerial with a rising stage and pyro effects lining the catwalk. "It was a last-minute adjustment, but

the team was fantastic, and the final picture was a success."

Ted Bowers (Strategic and Technical Consultant for Haute) can also speak for how important it is to have a creative and communicative team: the multi-day "Arabian Nights" event was interrupted by the largest storm to ever hit that region. With flooding and other dangers, the client made the call to move the entire event indoors—and once the weather cleared up, to move it back outdoors. Everything had to be adapted to new blueprints, but because Haute had an excellent team, they succeeded. "Our local producer and crew were fantastic. Our team worked around the clock to finish in time," says Bowers.

Taking time to meet with all parties involved before the event, as well as having a solid communication strategy, is vital in this new era of young talent. "There are a lot of new faces that need mentorship," says Gray. "They need the wisdom that unfortunately has left our industry, and I think they show a lot of potential. And there are a lot of people that through the pandemic thrived in developing new skillsets." Create the space for communication and flexibility, and it won't matter if your team is comprised of veterans or new faces. The talent and willingness to make an event succeed is what counts.

"When you have great people to work with and surround you, you can create some pretty magical experiences," says Gray.

Left: Pyrotechnics are a favorite technological dramatic effect for Cirque Berzerk events, like these flames surrounding dancers at the Beauty Envision Awards. Photo courtesy K. Garibay

Sensory Inclusive Events

Fireworks, flashing lights, and blaring music will capture your audience's attention, but it might also completely overwhelm certain eventgoers. One in six individuals in the U.S. have a sensory need, such as anxiety, PTSD, or autism. KultureCity, a leading nonprofit that works in sensory accessibility and acceptance, works to educate and assist planners with helping these individuals. Uma Srivastava, who helps lead the organization, says that there are a few things planners can do to create sensory inclusive events. First, before an event, you can create a social story. This is a visual narrative that walks eventgoers through the event so that they can prepare by knowing what triggers to expect and what modifications they can ask for. Then, planners can provide sensory bags, which KultureCity creates, to help individuals regulate. These bags often include noise-blocking headphones, fidget tools, weighted lap pads, and strobe reduction glasses. You can also talk with your venue to see what kind of sensory modifications they provide.

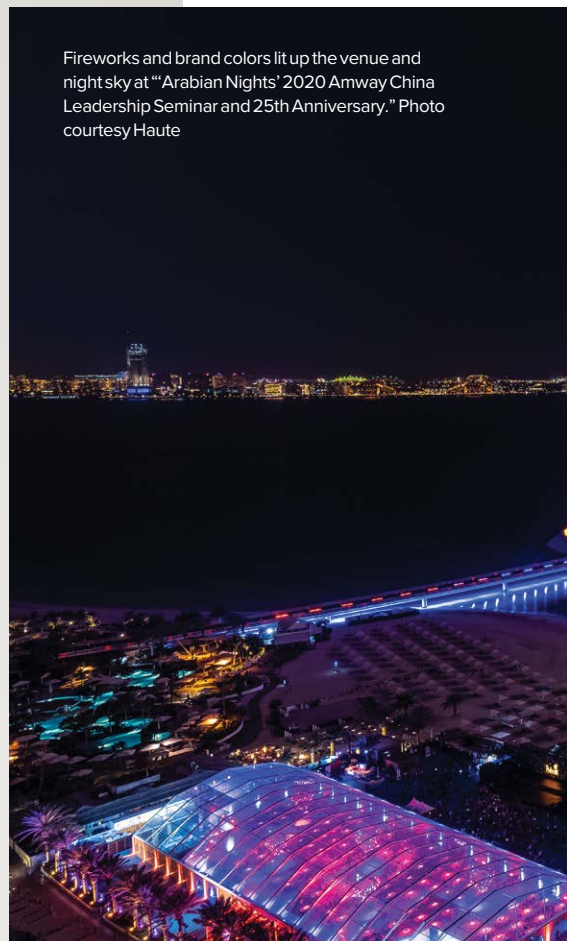
Srivastava says that you don't have to change your entire event—designing for one community will inherently alienate another. "It's providing some other elements to the table for those with sensory needs," she says. Srivastava also says the best thing you can do is

to educate yourself and your staff. "Design for those that are typical because we want to make sure everybody gets to enjoy it," she says, "but as you're designing, think about your environment and say, 'How can I train staff?'"

Teach them cues to look for in guests that might be uncomfortable—for example, someone getting up and leaving in the middle of a performance isn't necessarily rude but might be dealing with a sensory issue. Someone bouncing up and down in their seat might seem rude to the person next to them, but they might be regulating their sensory sensitivity. For planners who want to begin offering more event options, KultureCity has a **Sensory Inclusive Certification Program that trains event professionals in becoming more inclusive**. Practice patience and empathy, and know that it is a learning process; you'll get better at accommodating attendees with sensory needs the more you practice.



Fireworks and brand colors lit up the venue and night sky at "Arabian Nights' 2020 Amway China Leadership Seminar and 25th Anniversary." Photo courtesy Haute



(Here & inset) A flashy skyline and diamond-shaped video screens illuminate the background as performers entertain the crowd of "Arabian Nights' 2020 Amway China Leadership Seminar and 25th Anniversary." Photo courtesy Haute





options, multiple projectors—whatever you won't be able to touch once the room is filled with thousands of people. Utilize your team as well: hire a diverse set of talent who knows what to look for that you might not necessarily think of.

CREATING A NARRATIVE THAT YOUR AUDIENCE CAN RELATE TO

Technology and effects can only get you so far if you don't have content that is engaging at its core. The other question Down uses to begin show design is, "What story are we telling?"

For Haute, one of the first steps of their award-winning event "Arabian Nights' 2020 Amway China Leadership Seminar and 25th Anniversary" was researching the audience. Ted Bowers, Strategic and Technical Consultant, notes that they invested in a lot of research to develop new concepts that addressed the taste of their Chinese guests, as well as the client's purpose and the iconic value of the location.

"It's the audience's response that counts. Our goal was to ensure guests had an unforgettable, exciting experience in each collaboration and that meant a stage design to support and complement the entire event," he says.

For the audience, that meant including magicians and an international performer who could sing in Mandarin.

One of Down's events, Wella's Beauty Envision Awards, drew the audience in through a story of society rising from the ashes of all the catastrophes of 2020 and a disconnected pre-pandemic world. "You must engage the audience emotionally to bring them on the journey with you," says Down. "If you don't connect on that level with an audience, you have lost them."

With proper preparation and a combination of technology and narrative, you can set a stage that attendees are sure to remember. ●



Pitch the Perfect Tent

How putting intention into tent
design can elevate any event

By Amanda Nicklaus

Sail
decorated in
Photo c



One huge benefit of tents is that you can bring the event wherever the scenery is best.
Photo Courtesy Marcia Selden Catering & Events

“Like any event, a professional should recommend the best option to achieve success around the goals and objectives of the client.”

– Phyllis Jablonowski (Eventricity)

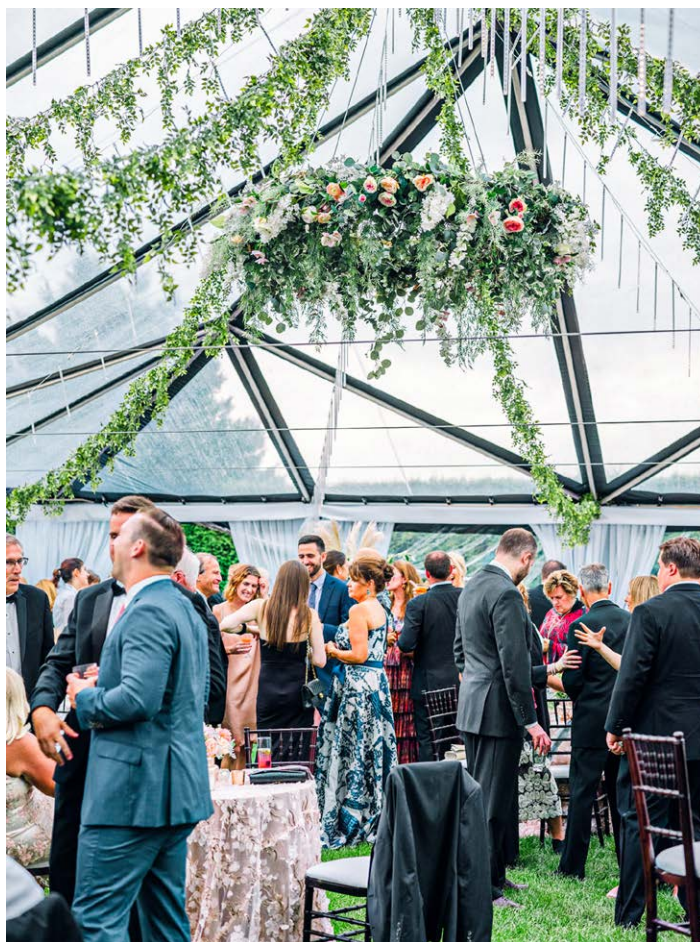
IN THE PAST couple of years, you’ve probably *pitched* the idea of tents to your clients more than ever before, as outdoor events boomed due to the pandemic. Though air and traffic flow play equal roles in determining tent type, many other factors (tent styles, add-ons, functions, and vendor service accommodations) are necessary to take your client’s occasion to the next level.

White cloth marquee tent
decorated with roses and greenery.
Photo Courtesy Rodeo & Co

As an event planner, it's up to you to know your stuff and make the best decisions for the overall event experience. "Like any event, a professional should recommend the best option to achieve success around the goals and objectives of the client," says Phyllis Jablonowski of Eventricity. "The type of tent, company to perform, additional required items—all are in service of ensuring the client has [expectations] met or exceeded. This is why a planner needs to educate the client on the process, which is very different from booking a ballroom."

CHOOSE THE RIGHT STYLE

While tent styles are continuously evolving, most are either pole or frame style. Pole tents are a bit easier to install, but that doesn't necessarily make them the better choice. Utilizing a central pole as primary support for the roof, they require staking, which can be an obstacle and block





Opposite page: Beside a sailcloth reception tent, this wedding also used a clearspan tent to host an after party. Leafy greenery and star pendant lighting drew eyes upward, where guests could see the stars once the sun set. Photo courtesy Rodeo & Co

Left: Draping, curving lines and warm glowing ambience are some of the benefits of a sailcloth tent. Photo courtesy Pogo Photo



Custom dance floor wraps and statement light fixtures transform a tent into an entirely new space, transporting guests into a cozy and ambient venue. Photo courtesy Pogo Photo

the center view. Frame tents reinforce the roof without the need for center support and are freestanding, keeping the view unobstructed. Other tenting styles include clearspan tents, which use box beam construction and clear vinyl tops, yurts, marquee tents (also known as century tents), and stretch tents. Fabric can be made more ornate or aesthetically pleasing, such as the use of sailcloth instead of vinyl. According to a recent survey by *Special Events* (SE) magazine, pole tents and frame tents are equally the most preferred styles, with clearspan tents a close second.

Matching the frame and fabric to the event aesthetic is important. Luxury event and wedding planner Jackie Watson (Jaclyn Watson Events) uses sailcloth to create the environment for romance. “You cannot have elegance and romance with a century tent or frame tent because it is hard plastic and hard lines,” she says. “The sailcloth tent is this stunning translucent tent that loves to display all the shadows from your lighting and floral design.”

While logistics are important to factor into your decision, the SE survey showed that aesthetic is the reigning element: 40% of planners choose a tent based on aesthetic, while 20% choose based on price and another 20% on ease of installation. Take time to think about how the fabric and structure will affect the mood and ambience of your events and use that intention to bring your visions to life.

ADD THE PERFECT TOUCHES

Today, add-ons are the key to giving a tented space a total transformation. Luxury decoration and additions create ambience and can even make a tent seem like more of a venue. Different flooring styles make an outdoor tent feel homey, elegant, or natural; 40% of survey respondents



Ornately decorated lighting fixtures combined with simple greenery create an eye-catching tented space. Photo Courtesy Marcia Selden Catering & Events



The Rise of the Mobile Mini Bar

PORTABLE BARS MAKE bartending outdoors easier, and when designed right, they can contribute to the overall event experience. As outdoor events evolve, luxury amenities with more intentional design are of increasing importance. Lily Taylor of Vistabule says that its trailers often play this role at events. “The design intention keeps camping in mind, but luxury glampers use these craft trailers to fit other needs too, as portable mini-bars at weddings.” Trailers like these include features that improve outdoor bartending, such as a galley hatch that provides shelter while washing, prepping, and cooking; purpose-designed cabinets for silverware, spices, wine and bottles, mugs, and more; and a pullout drawer, cooler storage, and refrigeration configuration options. From cocktails to coffee, serving guests from a mobile mini bar will keep bartending easy and enjoyable.

Instagram Get inspired!

Follow these designers for some fresh tent ideas.



Vistabule kitchentte, which is often used as a minibar. Photo courtesy @patrick_njoa (Patrick Botticelli, New Jersey Outdoor Adventures)



Photo courtesy @undercanvasofficial

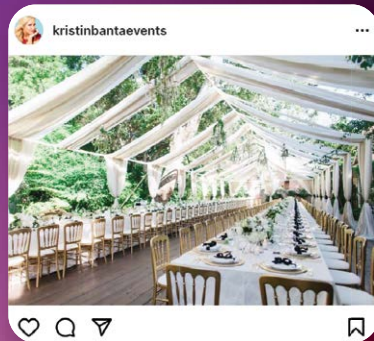


Photo courtesy @kristinbantaevents



Photo courtesy @secret.chicago



Photo courtesy @stamford_tent





Top left: Dark custom hardwood floors provide texture contrasted against lighter wooden tables and chairs, while blush ceiling draping and thousands of twinkling lights create dramatic rustic effects. Photo courtesy JAG Studios

Bottom: Elegant golden chandeliers in wrought iron cages created a sophisticated tone inside the tent. Photo courtesy Rodeo & Co



prefer hardwood flooring and 13% prefer carpet. Ceiling liners, lighting, and floral treatments provide pops of color and elegance to the space; HVAC systems control temperature and air quality; even French doors and connecting canopies direct the flow of traffic and create a sophisticated feel. The SE survey revealed that lighting and sidewalls are the most requested add-ons.

Watson uses décor and add-ons to create texture and elevated effects. For one wedding, she used custom hardwood floors and adorned the tent with thousands of twinkling lights and multiple wrought iron crystal chandeliers, as well as blush ceiling draping to create a dramatic effect. “With this particular tent, we chose to have dark wood floors and lighter chairs for seating to add texture,” she says. “We then added in elements of large gold centerpieces for opulence.” By using tents as a blank canvas instead of just a function of shelter, Watson completely transforms spaces that set the mood of the event.

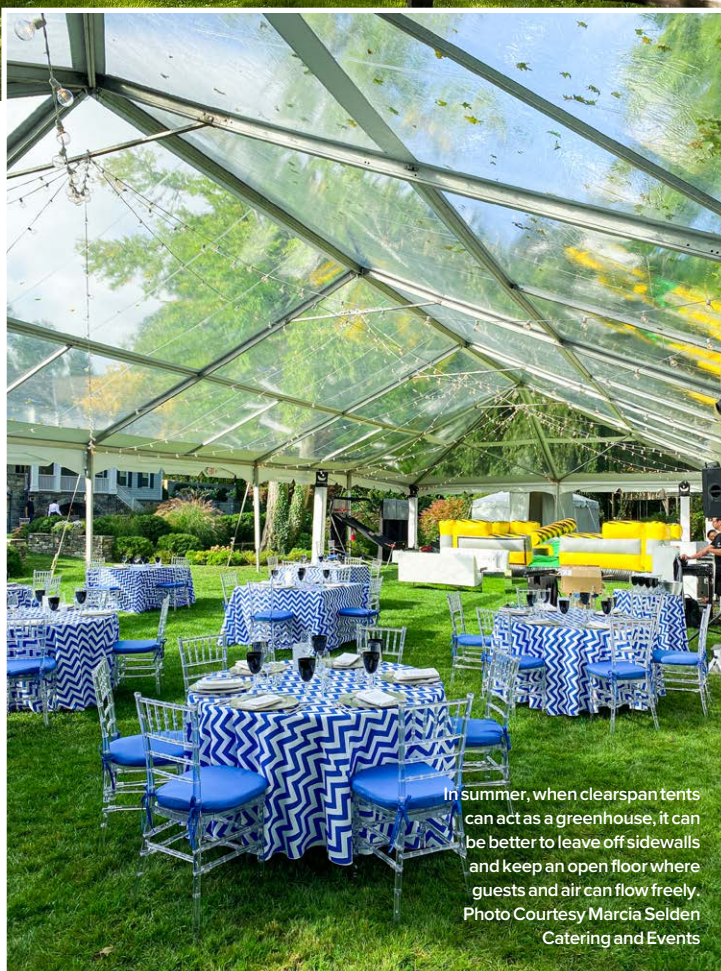
MAKE IT A GLAMPING TRIP

Tents can be set up and taken down for special occasions, but there are other options besides bringing the tents to your events. Bring your events to a glampsite! There are a growing number of event venues that provide long-term luxury camping setups to allow the whole of your events to take place in the open air. These venues can set up tented villages with sleeping accommodations, amenities, and event tents in stunning natural areas. The company Under Canvas, for example, creates pop-up glampsites and provides hospitality services across select National Parks, with locations like Bryce Canyon, the Great Smoky Mountains, and Yellowstone.

Glamping is a growing trend among campers and event goers. Lily



Above: Multiple tents can guide the flow of guests and create a customized event space.
Photo courtesy JAG Studios



In summer, when clearspan tents can act as a greenhouse, it can be better to leave off sidewalls and keep an open floor where guests and air can flow freely.
Photo Courtesy Marcia Selden Catering and Events

Taylor, HR Consultant for Vistabule teardrop trailers, understands why nature events are so alluring. “There’s so much stress out there right now,” she says. “People are constantly dealing with bad news and changing job situations, and more and more people are realizing that getting away from screens and getting into nature is the key to reducing stress. The wilderness is therapeutic.” From weddings, reunions, retreats, brand activations, and more, glamping events can be held in tents under the stars, all while in the peace of the natural world. Host your events at a glampsite for a refreshing way to make tents the star player of your events and to create a uniquely memorable experience for all guests.

Knowing the ins and outs of tent styles, add-on options, and even tented venues will set you apart as an event planner who has the resources and knowledge to bring your clients’ visions to life, *under* any circumstances. ●



Save the Dates!

catersource® + **THE
SPECIAL
EVENT®**

MARCH 27-30, 2023

ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER • ORLANDO, FL

OR
LAN
DO

conference.catersource.com
thespecialeventshow.com

CONFETTI

I'M DREAMING
OF A

Pink Christmas



A dancing pink Santa and his elves impressed the crowd with their moves.



Everything in sight was Christmas-themed, including this table, which was wrapped in a ribbon and bow.



Christmas

HOW ONE EVENT
COMPANY TOOK
A DECEMBER
BIRTHDAY TO THE
NEXT LEVEL



A variety of Christmas acts entertained guests all evening, like this hip-hop dance troupe of toy soldiers.



Guests could pose for photos with Santa in his pink lacquered sleigh pulled by flamingoes. A sugar plum ballerina floated nearby.



The birthday star blows out the candle on her Christmas gift-styled cake.



A contortionist twists their body in a life-size snow globe.



A miniature village of food stations kept guests satisfied. Santa's Salty Pretzel Bar was a favorite, offering freshly baked soft pretzels.

By Amanda Nicklaus

All photos courtesy of
Damon Tucci Photography

WITH A NAME LIKE MARY CHRIS SMITH, it's hard to imagine any other way to spend a 60th birthday celebration in December than with a prominent Christmas theme. So, for Smith's birthday event, Table 6 Productions decked the halls in a glitzy dream world of Pink Christmas, and the results were a scene to remember.

Held at the iconic Vinoy Renaissance Hotel, along the harbor of St. Petersburg, Fla., the holiday theme took on a Florida flair with touches of flamingo décor stationed throughout the location. With changing LED graphic backdrops on stage and a snowflake light show reflecting off the pink-lit hotel, the scene was set.

Upon arriving, guests entered through a monogrammed pink glitter walkway with drifting snowflakes and were serenaded by a soloist and human harpist singing "Carol of the Bells." Nearby, 12-foot pink toy soldiers stood at attention. The scene was something out of the second act of the *Nutcracker* ballet, except this dreamy Kingdom of Sweets was a monochromatic pink wonderland. Continuing along, guests walked through a pink Christmas fantasy world, with a pink lacquered Santa sleigh pulled by flamingo reindeer. A sugar plum fairy ballerina fluttered through pink Christmas trees.

Rosy Christmas trees wound their way throughout the event space and onto the stage, where two massive 24-foot custom-built three-level pink tree silhouettes showcased performers. The entertainment kept guests in good spirits, from glittering pink-gowned electric violinists and tutu-clad ballerinas, to Santa's performing elves and a toy soldier hip-hop dance troupe. A nine-piece band played tunes, LED-lit sugarplum ballet dancers twirled across the stage, and even contortionists twisted about in giant snow globes. To fill in between sets, a DJ kept the night hyped up (wearing a pink satin tux, what else?).

The flamingo theme was in full swing at multiple bars, where a mixologist styled like the blushing birds offered specialty cocktails, including the evening's signature drink "Mary Mary Quite Contrary," a vodka-based beverage with maraschino liqueur, pineapple and lemon juices, raspberry syrup, and topped with sparkling pink cotton candy and a blood orange wheel. Catered cuisine provided by the Vinoy was presented in a miniature village of custom-designed interactive food stations by Lowe and Behold Designs out of Orlando. One of the favorites from the night was Santa's Salty Pretzel Bar, a pink food truck serving freshly baked soft pretzels. All food and beverage staff wore pink Santa hats and MC's Elves tees to fully participate in the fun.

Guests brought home a souvenir of the evening from elf workshops offering custom cookie tins and personalized glass ornaments. To round out the event, fireworks lit up the harbor, announcing the celebration of two holidays—wishing guests a Merry Christmas and a Merry Mary Bash. ●



Fireworks lit up the sky over St. Petersburg harbor.



(Above) A giant floral piece with the initials of the event name welcomed guests in for the evening.

(Left) A soloist and a human harpist greeted guests with a dramatic rendition of "Carol of the Bells."

Prepping for Engagement Season? Start Testing Now to Put Social Ads on Auto-Pilot



“In many cases, [target audiences] need more than a quick comment with an emoji to make a significant buying decision.”

By Christie Osborne

With the holiday season upon us, many event pros are gearing up for a busy season of cheerful parties and catered dinners. Somewhere between the festivities, they're also hoping to find time to relax and celebrate the season with loved ones after a particularly hectic summer of weddings and events.

With engagement season running concurrently, you might be wondering where it all fits in. Countless couples say “yes!” between Thanksgiving through Valentine’s Day, making late Q4 into Q1 an advantageous time for wedding pros to increase brand awareness and land new clients with social ads.

But don’t be concerned! You don’t need to sacrifice turkey dinners or family reunions to keep your brand front-and-center throughout engagement season.

By preparing and testing social media ads now, you’ll learn everything you need to put your ads on autopilot for the holidays and set yourself up for success in 2023. Here’s how you can start testing ads today.

What should you test?

You can’t put ads on autopilot until you figure out what wins your ideal client’s click. As you prepare for engagement season, focus on testing two elements:

Copy length

There is a common belief that younger audiences don’t read copy but it’s not true. While they may not read every word when browsing for inspiration, you can bet they’re paying attention to details once they’re ready to invest

thousands of dollars. In many cases, they need more than a quick comment with an emoji to make a significant buying decision. Test short, medium, and long versions of your ad copy with a basic image to determine what hits the mark with your audience.

Creative

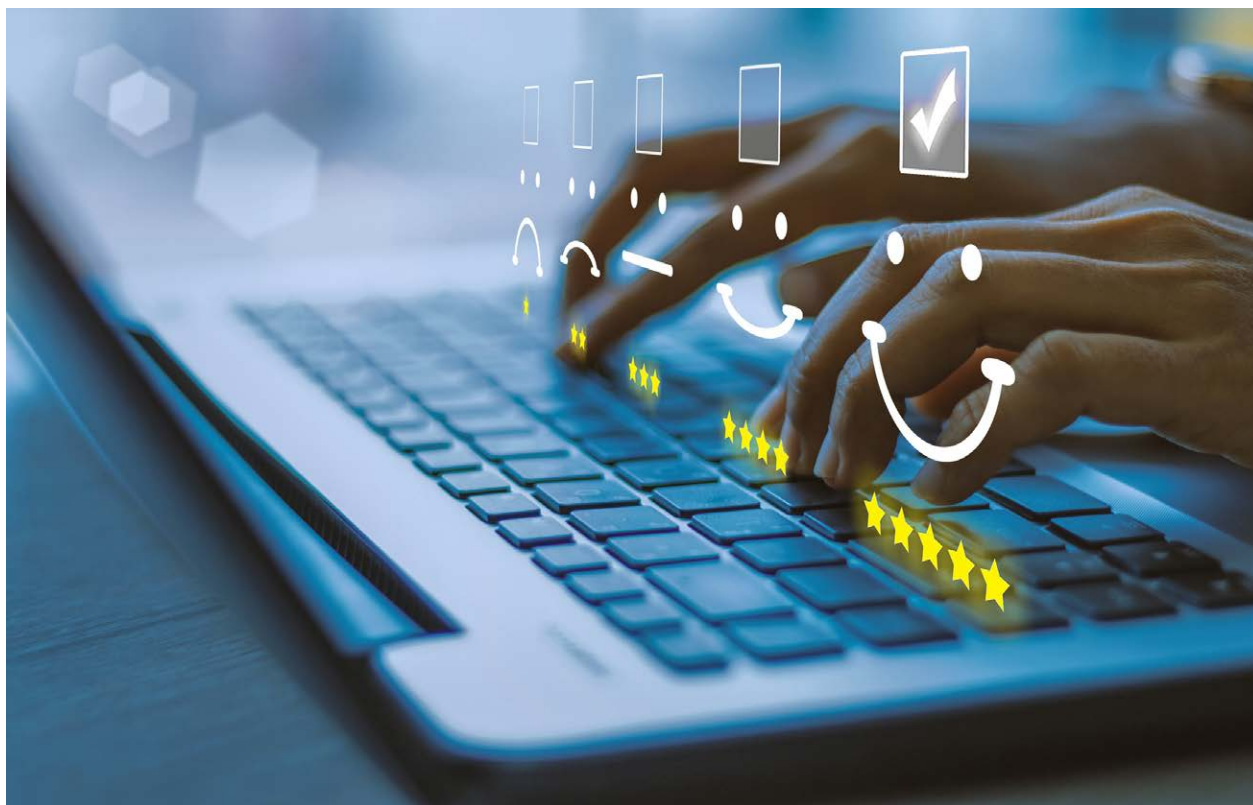
Images and videos are supposed to catch your ideal client’s eye as they’re scrolling through their feed, so testing helps you find the most “clickable” piece of content. Use the winning copy length (short, medium, or long) for all creative testing, switching up only the visuals. For a wedding planner, you may consider a portrait of a couple, a photo of décor details, or a video of a reception space. Use what you have!

If you want to further optimize, you may also test campaign types (e.g., traffic, lead, engagement) and audiences (e.g., geography, look-alike). However, if you are short on time, focus on copy length and creative elements.

Once you’ve collected enough data to discern the winning combo of ad copy and creative, you can set them up for automated success through the holidays and engagement season.

What can you ignore?

The digital ad landscape can feel confusing, even for those who know their way around a marketing funnel. There are many ways to set up ads for certain goals, but most businesses don’t need to concern themselves with every option. In particular, you can



confidently ignore these two ad formats:

Interest targeting

While interest targeting worked well back in the day, changes to Meta's Business Manager have limited its efficacy for testing purposes. When testing ads, your audience size should fall between one and three million. But if you're adding audience interests to geo-targeting, you'll reduce the size too much for accurate results. Instead, you'll get better results by simply letting the Meta algorithm do its job with an appropriate audience size.

Brand awareness campaigns

Meta loves brand awareness ads because it makes their ads look cheap, but cheap eyeballs aren't always the right eyeballs. Brand awareness ads are known as "remnant ads," since they get the space left over after the highly-coveted spots are taken up by sales, lead, traffic, and engagement ads. If you want to attract action-takers instead of lookers, stick with traffic ads for testing.

How do you test?

Now that you know what to do, let's talk about the how. The idea is to identify

exactly what works through the process of elimination, so make sure to change only one element at a time. If you're testing copy length, keep your creative consistent. If you're testing creative, keep your copy length consistent.

When testing, keep it running until you reach at least 1,000 people. With a smaller budget of \$15–\$25 per day, you'll typically hit 1,000 people within a week. Once you do, evaluate the data to determine what works and start optimizing around those winning ad combos.

How do you measure success?

There are two key metrics to track for social media ad testing, especially when first starting out: your click-through rate (CTR) and cost-per-click (CPC). Aim for a CTR of 1% or higher and a CPC of \$1 or lower.

When reviewing insights in Business Manager, head over to the "views" section and set clicks to "outbound clicks" for the most accurate data. If the numbers don't fall within the success range, keep testing with fresh creative and messaging until you figure out what

resonates best with your audience.

An effective social media strategy is set-up for year-round success, from engagement season to the peak of busy wedding season. However, you don't need to spend time or energy keeping it going every month.

With proper testing, you can easily put social ads on autopilot for a steady stream of inquiries without constant oversight. ●

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. Christie regularly shares industry insight in her *Catersource* column, as well as on *SpecialEvents.com*, *Wed Altered*, *Risingtide Society*, *WeddingIQ* and NACE's industry blog.

How Tech Supports Sales Conversions



The most successful salespeople know that tech **supports** their process by fostering a consistent and efficient experience for new leads.

By Elizabeth Sheils

There has been plenty of discussion about how tech and automation can streamline the client experience and put your marketing on autopilot but selling remains a hands-on process to provide prospects with an authentic and personal touch. Turning leads into booked clients requires you (or your sales team) to show up on behalf of your brand.

Even though potential customers expect a real-life person on the other side of the screen, that's not to say technology doesn't have its place in a sales workflow. In fact, the most successful salespeople know that tech supports their process by fostering a consistent and efficient experience for new leads.

If you're not leveraging tech to reach your full selling potential, here are four ways to increase your conversion rate and win over your dream clients.

QUICKER RESPONSE TIMES

When a potential buyer is finished researching, they typically reach out to a shortlist of event pros who meet their needs. If you're lucky enough to get an inquiry, there's a good chance your competitors are reading the same email. In a perfect world, people would wait to hear from every option before deciding; but in reality, your prospects are looking for timeliness and aren't afraid to jump on one of the first respondents to start a conversation.

Take advantage of templated emails to be the first one out of the gate. Most customer relationship management (CRM) platforms allow you to template or automate emails triggered by an inquiry. And while taking

advantage of this is a must, don't forget to add a personal touch. If you don't love a CRM for inquiry responses, no problem! Canned responses in Gmail allow you to quickly update and send without much effort.

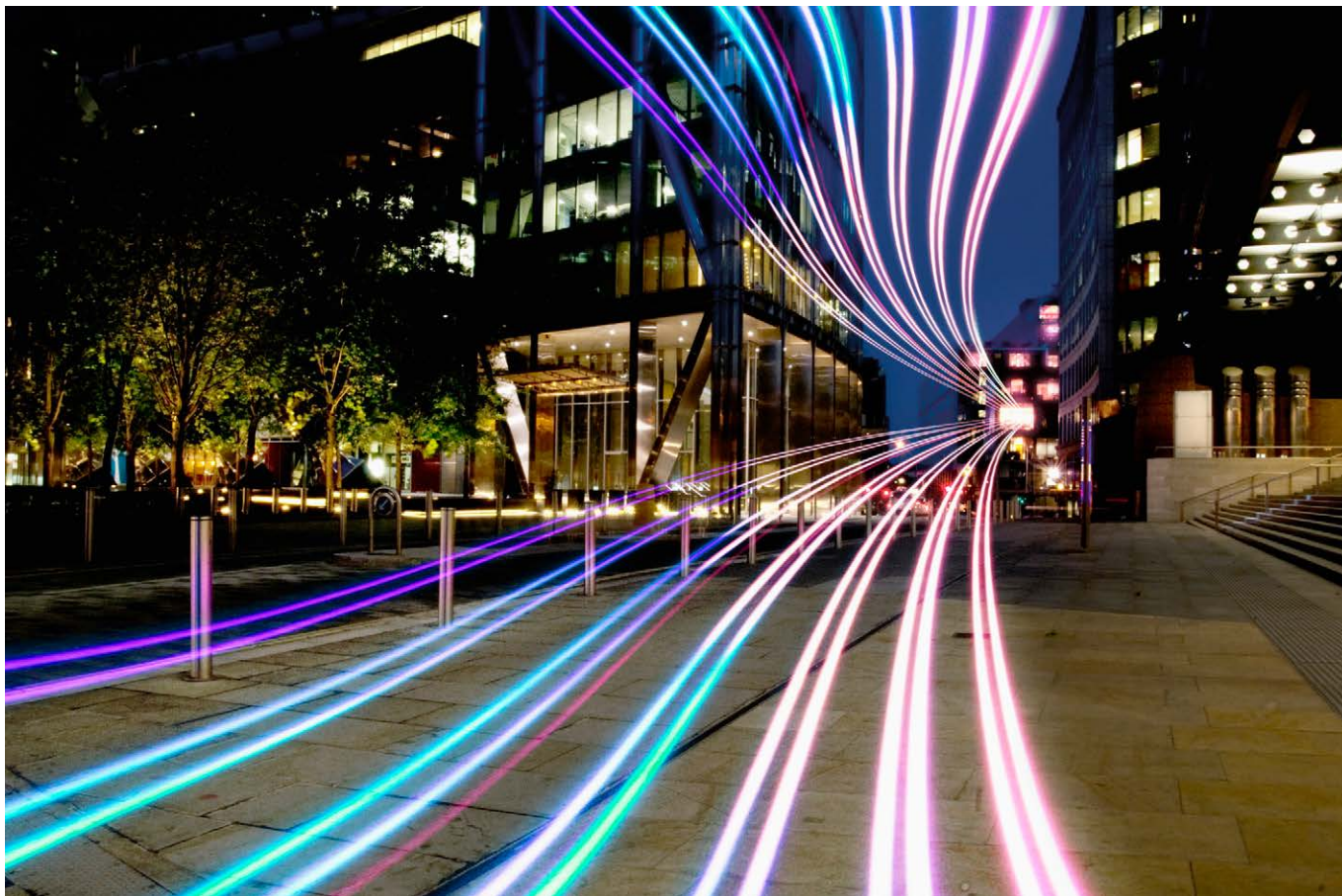
DOCUMENTS AT THE READY

Have you ever had a great sales call, only to get radio silence after sending over a proposal? After hanging up, you draw up a contract, create an invoice, and send the package over—but it seems like your lead has gone missing! This often happens because of two reasons. First, the booking process is not digital and second there is too much time between the sales pitch and the contract, giving them a chance to hesitate, reconsider, and talk to your competitors.

Instead of relying on follow-up emails, adjust your process to close the sale while you are still on the call. Make templates for your contract and invoice wherever you have them (or opt for a streamlined platform that handles both sides). Then, when you're on a call and your prospect sounds excited, let them know everything is ready to go and send it right away. Don't let bookings slip through your hands; make the signing and paying process seamless by accepting online signatures and payments.

SEAMLESS ONBOARDING TRANSITION

Onboarding is often viewed as an entirely separate process from selling, but a great sales workflow tees up a seamless transition to make it official. If you already have a defined onboarding process for new clients, it's a simple matter of connecting the first step to the



final step of your sales workflow. For example, paying a deposit may trigger an automated email with a link to schedule a kickoff call and a new client questionnaire.

If you don't have an onboarding process set, take a step back and review your sales process. What kind of information do you collect by the time they sign a contract? What else do you need to get started? Is there anything you want to include to enhance the onboarding experience, like a welcome gift or a complimentary mood board? When you use tech to streamline the transition, it also becomes easy to delegate sales and onboarding tasks to your team.

CONSISTENT BRAND EXPERIENCE

As your team grows and more employees take on sales responsibilities, it can be harder to achieve a consistent

brand experience. With so many personalities and voices to balance, tech helps to integrate your messaging and avoid discrepancies between individual team members.

Automated emails, canned responses, and branded documents ensure every prospect gets the same experience from the initial inquiry to the moment they put down a deposit. With your sales process streamlined, it won't matter who a new lead reaches—whether it's your most veteran salesperson, a new hire, or even yourself!

Event technology is made to facilitate a smooth client experience, but it's just as useful before they sign on the dotted line. An efficient sales workflow sets expectations for a streamlined planning process, so don't forget to optimize from the very first touchpoint! ●

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



FOOD FOR FÊTES



Mealtime is when a lot of business takes place with associates from around the world; it's an opportunity to not be focused on work, but rather congratulate, network, relax and share together.

Thinking Outside the Box Store

by **Amber Kispert**

Walmart and Chartwells team up to feed 6,000 people a day (for six days) during the Walmart Associates Week and Shareholders Celebration.

Feeding 6,000 people a day over a six-day period may seem like a huge undertaking—and it is—but for Holly Keeter (corporate events manager for Walmart Corporation) it's all in a day's work.

"Food is an experience within itself and can make or break someone's experience within your event," she says. "If they leave hungry, they may not have a good experience."

It was up to Keeter (with the help of Chartwells at the University of Arkansas) to ensure that the 6,000 Walmart and Sam's Club associates who descended on the University of Arkansas and the surrounding area for the annual Walmart Associates Week and Shareholders Celebration did indeed receive a good experience.

"It actually gets pretty crazy for us," says Jack Ervin, Vice President of Operations for Chartwells at the University of Arkansas. "When you bring in a large crowd like this from so many different places, the one thing they have in common is breaking bread."

All photos courtesy Walmart Inc. unless otherwise noted

(Below) What's a meal without dessert? Throughout the week, Walmart and Sam's Club associates were treated to such sweet options as shave ice and popsicles.



For National Donut Day (June 3) Walmart partnered with a local bakery who baked 7,000 fresh donuts. Photo courtesy FGF Brands



(Top right and above) Beyond the catered meals within the parking garage for associates, Walmart also partnered with several local food vendors for the additional outdoor and off-campus events, including Carsten's Concessions.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

When planning to feed thousands of people, Keeter said it's not that much different from feeding a few hundred.

"As an event planner my approach is the same regardless of the size of the event: partnership and clear, timely communication," she says. "I need to trust the caterer and they also need to trust me."

"There will always be some type of challenge within your event, but teams who manage one challenge well together go into the next event stronger."

Throughout the week, Walmart and Chartwells worked together to feed the out-of-town attendees. The key to successfully feeding such a large number of people is open lines of communication, Keeter says. "Also, we follow a very strict agenda to keep groups moving."

Ervin agrees with Keeter, it's all about the sharing of information.

"We definitely need to get started early," he says. "We keep copious notes so that we can always stay way ahead of the game, but it really comes down to constantly sharing because there's only

so much we can plan ahead for—we do a lot of it on the fly."

GET CREATIVE

Feeding so many people (in such a hot environment) proved to be a challenge for Walmart and Chartwells.

"Due to the location of the event, we are challenged with finding creative spaces to feed large amounts of people," says Keeter. "Most all our eating locations are outside and in Arkansas the weather can be quite unpredictable."

Fortunately, Walmart was able



Food for Thought

Special Events magazine reached out to Flavor Forward Events (Katie Ayoub and Pam Smith), a boutique consultancy that works to elevate food and beverage menus with trend-forward ideas and immersive experiences, to see what's trending in food for corporate events this year. Here are their thoughts:

"There are so many ways to build a winning corporate event. Successful ones create engagement, make memories, and deliver incredible flavor movements. They give employees a chance to come together and celebrate," says Smith. "When building menus for daytime corporate events, it's important to keep the food energizing. No one wants what I call 'boat sinkers.' Those are dishes that just torpedo people's energy and make them want to take a nap. Instead, you want to provide food that is delicious and wholesome, giving them the brain boost they need to keep them engaged and invigorated throughout the day. One trend Katie and I are seeing—and recommending for our clients—is 'brain bowls.' These are all about feeding the brain, which we know feeds your mood. For a corporate lunch event, I might make a Roasted Salmon Brain Bowl, with grilled maitake mushrooms, farro cooked in mushroom 'no-bones-about-it' broth, baby kale, tart red cherries and citrus-sherry

vinaigrette."

For the evening side of corporate events, Ayoub says: "Some of the more leading-edge serving styles we're implementing include: moving from linear buffet-style service to free-flowing tasting experiences, including roving hawkers trays and dynamic walls, as well as switching traditional carving and action stations to a 'theatre in the round,' where the chef carves the protein or tends the skillet, while servers plate and serve guests who gather around the circle to receive the dish without waiting in a line. For thrilling immersive experiences that deliver a bit of suspense we're using timed curtain reveals throughout the evening, which helps build a narrative and a rhythm around an F&B menu for a large space. It's particularly effective for after-hours cocktail experiences or dessert bars."

Additionally, a few flavor trends to watch for the remainder of 2022, and into 2023, according to Ayoub and Smith, include:

- 1. Vietnamese breakfast influences:** like egg custard coffee, breakfast banh mi and pandan coffee cake
- 2. Tropical escape:** anything with mango, guava, or passionfruit
- 3. Oysters with trend-forward flavor accents,** like shallot and melon mignonette, Morita chile, fermented tomato water, pomegranate-hibiscus pearls.

to solve this challenge several years ago by utilizing a one-level parking garage located under the University of Arkansas' Razorback training field. For six days, the parking garage is converted into a meal-prep area and dining hall for multiple waves of up to 3,000 Walmart and Sam's Club associates at a time.

"We pressure wash it, set tables and chairs, and the concrete keeps the rain out and the temperature cool," Keeter says. "Our caterer does an amazing job building a portable kitchen inside."

To help transport the food from campus kitchens to the parking garage, Chartwells utilized several large 18-wheeler trucks.

"We need to ensure that the food is still quality, still good, and it's fresh," says Chartwells Executive Chef Phillip Schaaf.

In conjunction with meals, Walmart also partnered with a local company called Food Loops, which diverts food waste. For the event, Walmart purchased compostable plates and service ware, and then Food Loops came on-site to divert waste. In that area alone, Walmart was able to divert 9,280 pounds of food waste and recyclable materials.

Another consideration that Walmart and Chartwells had to keep in mind when feeding thousands was the current eating patterns coming out of a pandemic. Are people eating the same? Have their patterns changed (healthier options, consumption quantities, etc.)?

"We have to have enough food options available, so the attendees have some say in what they eat within what is provided," Keeter says.

GLOBAL TASTES

When feeding 6,000 associates, it's not surprising that they will bring with them different dietary restrictions and different tastes.

Together, Keeter and Chartwells worked in consort to ensure that all dietary needs were met for thousands



Walmart and Chartwells at the University of Arkansas converted a one-level parking garage (located under the University of Arkansas' Razorback training field) into a meal-prep area and dining hall for multiple waves of up to 3,000 Walmart and Sam's Club associates at a time.

“I am the expert with my attendees, but the chef is the expert on food, so we each are bringing something to the table.” —Holly Keeter (Walmart)

of attendees. Attendees indicated during the event registration whether they required any special accommodations.

Keeter also looked to Chartwells' catering expertise for recommendations on what to serve since they have a much broader understanding of how to satisfy diverse tastes.

“When creating menus, I also must keep in mind not only dietary and allergy needs but also feeding palates from all over the world,” says Keeter. “I am the expert with my attendees, but the chef is the expert on food, so we each are bringing something to the table.”

The menu for the week included many southern classics including biscuits and gravy, barbecue brisket, and fried chicken.

“We obviously want to showcase the flavors of southern cuisine,” Schaaf says.

However, Chartwells also included items that more globally inspired palates could enjoy.

“We do a lot of rice and black beans because we try to be very thoughtful about everything we're serving,” he says. “But we also want to offer something that's unique and flavorful because that's the reason why they're here—they want their meal to be special.”

KEEPING IT LOCAL

Beyond the catered meals within the parking garage for associates, Walmart also partnered with several local food

vendors for the additional outdoor and off-campus events. For example, during both a vendor expo and an outdoor movie night, Walmart brought in local food truck vendors, such as Carsten's Concessions.

Walmart also partnered with other local food vendors including:

- For National Donut Day (June 3) Walmart partnered with a local bakery who baked 7,000 fresh donuts
- The Java Dudes coffee truck kept the caffeine flowing during a fast-paced week

- While attendees were on the move touring the Walmart home office, they enjoyed box lunches from Jason's Deli

“We definitely make an impact with this event on the Northwest Arkansas food scene,” says Keeter. “I know I have said this multiple times but building a partnership with your food vendors is so important to the success of your event—extraordinary customer service is important to Walmart and the same is expected of our vendors.

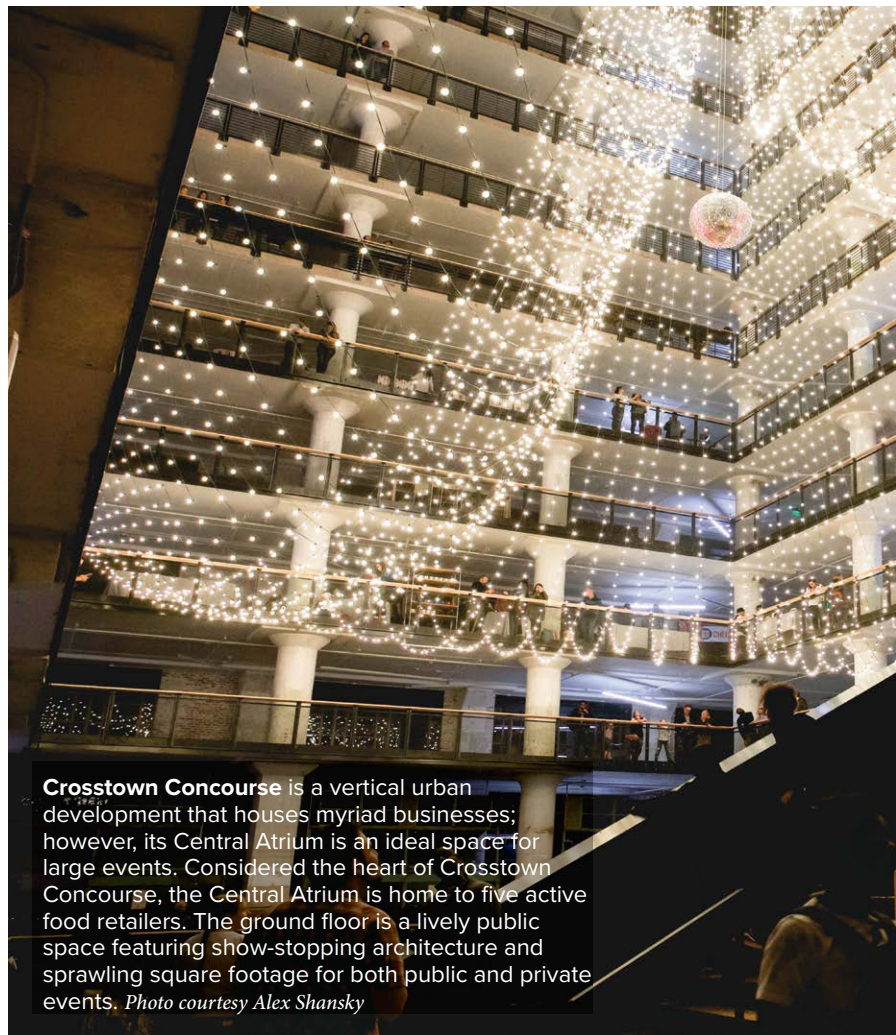
“My favorite quote from Sam Walton (founder of Walmart) is: ‘We're all working together; that's the secret.’ And that is the secret sauce! I am feeding thousands of people, and how I work with all my partners is truly going to make the difference in how successful this event is going to be—creativity, a team that can pivot quickly, and is easy to work with. Every event is going to come to an end, and it is how you manage through them that matters and determines your success.” ●

AS SEEN IN *Memphis*

ON A RECENT familiarization (FAM) trip to Memphis as a guest of LEO Events for the Le Bon Appetit charity event (supporting the Le Bonheur Children's Hospital), Special Events was able to experience the full spectrum of southern hospitality that calls Memphis home. ● —Amber Kispert



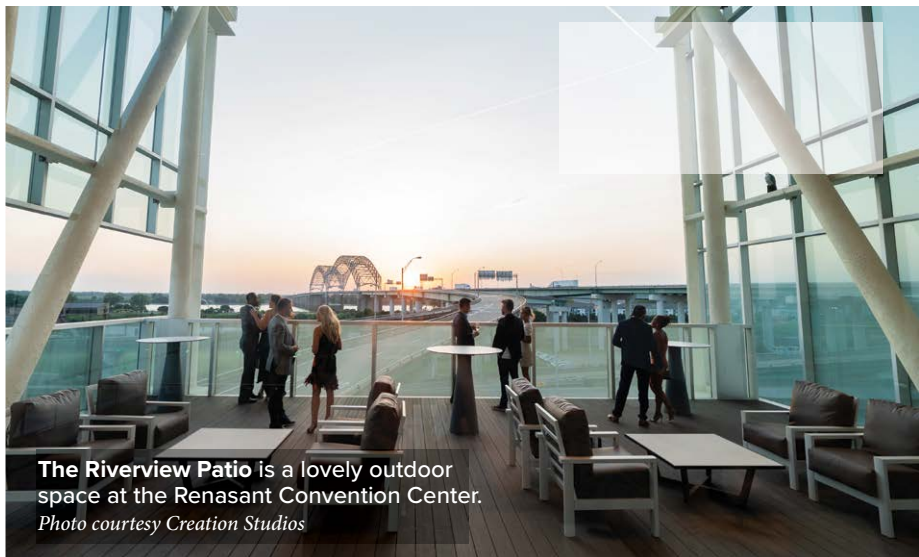
The Chapel in the Woods at Graceland is a popular wedding ceremony location. Photo courtesy The Warmth Around You



Crosstown Concourse is a vertical urban development that houses myriad businesses; however, its Central Atrium is an ideal space for large events. Considered the heart of Crosstown Concourse, the Central Atrium is home to five active food retailers. The ground floor is a lively public space featuring show-stopping architecture and sprawling square footage for both public and private events. Photo courtesy Alex Shansky



Presley Motors at Graceland is a popular event location, where guests can dine among Elvis Presley's automobiles and motorized vehicles, including Elvis' iconic Pink Cadillac. While being entertained by Elvis on the big screen, your guests will have the perfect photo op near the cars! Photo courtesy © EPE. Graceland and its marks are trademarks of EPE. All Rights Reserved. Elvis Presley™ © 2019 ABG EPE IP LLC



The Riverview Patio is a lovely outdoor space at the Renasant Convention Center. *Photo courtesy Creation Studios*



The Renasant Convention Center has a number of outdoor spaces, including the Riverview Terrace. *Photo courtesy Creation Studios*



Memphis is famous for a lot of reasons: for one, it's the birthplace of barbecue; it's also the home of soul, blues, and rock and roll music; and it has a dedication to revitalizing historic buildings. *Photo courtesy Special Events staff*

A BIG THANKS

TO OUR OUTSTANDING SPEAKERS

Catersource + The Special Event could not offer the unforgettable experience they do for attendees without the support of our generous speakers. We salute them here:

Adrienne Harris
Alan Berg, CSP
Aleya Harris
Alicia Falango
Alicia Schiro
Alisa Walsh, CITP, CIS
Amanda Ma
Amber Anderson
Anthony Lambatos
April Lambatos
Aron Schwartz
Art Menchaca
Aurora Dawn Benton
Barbara Bouman
Barbara Khozam
Barbara Moore
Beth Bracco
Bill Hansen
Bob Pacanovsky
Bobbi Brinkman
Bobby Dutton
Boris Seymore
Brian Acheson, CSEP
Brian Green
Bron Hansboro
Bryce Cherven
Camila Uribe
Carl Sacks
Carley Gauthier
Cathy Hardin
Cayetano Uribe
CeCe Todd
Charessa Sawyer, LMSW, CMP
Chris Dyer
Chris Taylor
Chrissy Thompson, DES
Christie Osborne
Christina Matteucci
Christopher Salem
Christopher Taylor
Chuck Salem
Cindy Cafferty
Cindy Novotny
Claudia Koehler
Clint Elkins
Colbert Callen
Colja Dams
Conner Black
Courtney Hopper
Craig Howard
Craig Tolliver
Cristian Hernandez
Dan Braunstein

Dana Buchanan
Dana Kadwell
David Beahm
David M Lombardo
David McCandless
David Merrell
David Porto
Dean Mistretta
Deanna Johnson
Deborah Elias, CSEP, CMP, CIS
Deborah Thomas, CSEP
Emeritus
Derek Woodruff
DuVal Warner
Dwayne Thomas
Elaine Pofeldt
Elise Luna
Elizabeth Sheils
Elle Bronson
Ellyn Nugent
Erika Kulovitz
Erin Branham, CSEP
Ethan Mantle
Fausto Pifferrer
Francesca Lombardo
Freddie Viren
Geoffrey Barker
Grace Gittinger, DES
Graham Anderson
Greg Shapiro
Greg Taylor
Gretchen Culver
Heidi Hughett
Holly Verbeck
Ijaz Jamal
Jaclyn Watson
Jaka Jaiteh
James Auerbach
Jamie Quickert
Jan Levie
Jason Sutton
Jay Varga
Jeanelle Powery
Jeff Haynes
Jeff Ware
Jeffrey Selden
Jen Taylor
Jennie Cook
Jennifer Bertolino
Jennifer Evans
Jennifer Perna
Jennifer Trotter
Jeremy Martorano

Joann Roth-Oseary
Joanne Purnell
John Crisafulli
Jonathan Aymin
Jordan Langer
Joseph Pina
Joshua Feinbloom
Judy Belcher, CSEP
Julia Conway
Julie Novack
Justin Pasha
Kaleigh Wiese
Karen Gordon
Kate Patay
Kate Whelan
Keith Lord
Kevin Bilida
Kevin Brewer
Kevin Dennis
Kirsten Ott Palladino
Kristi DePew
Larry Green
Lauren Chumbley
Leah Weinberg
Lee Anderson
Leilani Baugh
Leslie LaSorsa
Liese Gardner
Lisa Teiger
Liza Roeser
Mackenzie Zeitlin
Margaret Brower
Margaux Fraise
Mark Catuogno
Matt Mitchell
Maxwell Chapman
Meagan O'Flaherty
Meghan Ely
Melissa Tibben
Meredith Commender
Meredith Ryncarz
Meryl Snow
Michael Dwork
Michael Levitt
Michael Stavros
Mike Bicocchi
Molly Crouch
Monique Boyd
Nathaniel Neubauer
Nettie Frank
Nicholas Walker
Nora Sheils
Norm Bennett

Norma Charette
Paige Mejia
Pam Schwartz
Patrick McMichael, CSEP
Paul Buchanan
Paula Mettler
Paulina Corvi
Pauline Parry
Pawnta Shadab, CTA, CIS, CITP
Peggy Kelley
Peter Lentz
Peter McCaffrey
Rahm Fama
Renee Dalo
Renee Sabo
Reuben Bell
Rich Rosendale
Rob Barber
Rob Ferre
Robert Mitchell
Robin Selden
Ron Knoll
Rosemary Renteria-Vera
Roy Choi
Roy Porter
Ruchir Mewawala
Ryan Corvaia
Sam Jacobson
Sarah Noll Wilson
Sean O'Neil
Sebastien David
Shadi Hashemi
Shakira M. Brown
Shannon Jones, CMP
Stella Rankin
Stephanie Jayko
Stephanie Zemler
Steve Sanchez
Suzi McMerty Shands
Syd Sexton
Sylvain Gregoire
Talia Rogers
Terrica Skaggs
Terry Singleton, CSEP, CDMP
Thomas Whelan
Thuy Diep, CGSP, DMCP, CSEP
Tisha Holman
Tomer Grassiani
Tracy Stuckrath
Valerie Rubin
Yinka Freeman
Zoe Moore

Don't just read... *Listen*

Juicy food ideas, dazzling event designs, and other boots-on-the-ground tips to help caterers and event planners like you be more successful in your business.



*Candid
Conversations*

Powered by Catersource + The Special Event



For sponsorship opportunities, contact
bonnie.rayfield-warg@informa.com

Listen at www.specialevents.com/candid-conversations or
search for Candid Conversations in your favorite podcast app



THE LAST WORD



Editor's note: Liese Gardner wrote the submission for AOO Events' Best Fundraising or Nonprofit Event entry. They were announced a Gala winner for that category in Anaheim, Calif. in May 2022.

Gala & ACE Submissions Now Being Accepted

It's once again time to celebrate the best of the best! Nominations are now being accepted for the **2023 Special Events Gala and Catersource ACE Awards**. We invite you to submit your best work from the past year. Join in the excitement and the spirit of our industry as we celebrate the hard work and exceptional accomplishments of our peers. Eligible events must have occurred between January 01, 2022 and November 30, 2022.

To submit an entry to this year's Awards, please visit our [awards portal at https://ace-gala.award-splatform.com](https://ace-gala.award-splatform.com).

How to Turn Your Next Event into an Award-Winner

By Liese Gardner

You know your event was good, even great. It has award-winner written all over it: gorgeous décor, a definite purpose, and innovations galore. Now it's time to get the recognition you deserve; you are ready to enter the Gala or ACE Awards! But are you? Here are 14 things you will want to know.

Four things to know when writing the entry:

- 1. Write to one person—the judge.** Judges are looking at hundreds of entries. Like any of us reading a lot of material, they want to get to the bottom line fast. Why should this event win an award? What makes it unique? Put this information upfront.
- 2. Start with the biggest challenge of the event and highlight it often.** Challenges are the most significant reason events win awards, but they don't always have to be epic. Look at the event with fresh eyes, and you will be amazed at the heroic daily efforts you have overcome!
- 3. Remember, the judge could be tired of all this reading.** Wake them up with a conversational tone and a question. Why a question? Because it activates the brain and engages it again in the entry.
- 4. Take time to rewrite your information for the questions thoughtfully.** I know this might feel repetitive, but sometimes the judge could miss things. Having essential information in several places throughout the entry ensures they will see it.

Five top secrets no one will tell you, except me!

As one of the team members who created the Gala Awards and judged them for

a decade, as well as someone who has written many winning entries, here are some essential things to know.

- 1. Being nominated is just as great as winning, really!** So, make sure you promote it as much as you would a win.
- 2. If you have the time and budget, build specific elements into your event for the awards.** For instance, if you know the event is perfect for the new sustainability category, consider how to add details to the event to make it that much stronger. Again, a little forethought could make all the difference.
- 3. The maximum word count is just a suggestion.** Use just what you need to create a tighter, brighter entry.
- 4. Write a rough draft of your award entry** following the event so you don't forget all the juicy details.
- 5. Photos! So important.** Be sure to hire an excellent photographer if you think you have a potential award winner.

Five reasons why being nominated for (and winning) awards matter:

- 1. The excitement.** After all that hard work, it's nice to know that they love you. They really love you!
- 2. Third-party testimonial.** An award from a prestigious publication is a big plus for new clients and the media.
- 3. Bragging rights.** It's a legit reason to brag on social media and to your family (who always wonder just a little about what you really do)!
- 4. Team morale.** Nothing feels better than being recognized for great work.
- 5. Vendor love.** Awards enable you to give back on many levels.

Good luck! ●

LCA LEADING CATERERS OF AMERICA

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

Planning something special?

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



Corporate

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

Photo Credit: Catering Creations



Weddings

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

Photo Credit: Bonura Hospitality Group



Social

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

Photo Credit: Catering by Michael's



Nonprofits

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

Photo Credit: G Catering

Elite talent. Unbeatable service. Right where you need it.

Find an LCA caterer in your region!



MIDWEST

Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Wisconsin

Photo Credit: Zilli Hospitality Group



SOUTH

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

Photo Credit: Rosemary's Catering



WEST

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

Photo Credit: DSquared Hospitality Company



EAST

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

Photo Credit: The Classic Catering People

Learn more at [LeadingCaterers.com](https://www.leadingcaterers.com)



#LeadingCaterers