

catersource®

2020 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY



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By Sebastien Centner

IGNITING CREATIVITY

Yearly client bash levels up catering vessels & displays

Change is never easy, whether in work or in life. In our specific industry I've always felt that we tend to do things the same way mostly because we have so much else to deal with. We can't find the time, or sometimes the energy, to tackle reinvention.

But reinvention is not only necessary in our business, it is fundamental: both to our individual successes as catering companies, and for the industry in general as we continue to raise the bar for ourselves and our peers.

I don't like change necessarily, but when it involves catering and events, I actually love it. For example, I can accept that our smoked salmon lollipops are a fan favorite—and even when we take them off our menus our clients ask for them—but to me it is essential to balance this with creating new presentations and food ideas.

To satisfy our creativity we need to re-invent, and while this can be done in small measures or huge steps, I encourage each of you to look for ways you can reinvent what you do. Trust me when I say the end results will be worth it.

At Eentertainment Events & Catering we host an annual client event called 'Beats & Eats' that challenges us to come up with new and exciting catering and décor ideas. For this issue of *Catersource*, I thought I would share some of our new concepts with you.

Leveling up station displays

When I talk about 'leveling-up' a food station I mean it both figuratively and literally. Figuratively I mean: "come



A COLORFUL FRINGE BACKDROP WITH GOLD GEMSTONE PEACOCKS PROVIDED MORE PICTURE POSSIBILITIES FOR THOSE ADVENTUROUS SOULS.

on, let's put a bit more effort into our presentation," but literally I am talking about the very simple step of creating different levels on which to present your foods, since it adds so much in terms of look and style.

One of our featured stations was a massive Greek-inspired tapas table. We combined rental items like wooden chargers, rustic cake stands, and simple wooden risers with a few items we built in house, like our wooden three-tiered steps. The steps took almost no time (and very little budget to build) and renting instead of buying other items made it easier on our budget. We added inexpensive rustic wooden frames for the menus and voilà!

Mini meals & dramatic canape displays

I won't pretend that what we do is easy. No question about it, the time and energy that goes into some of our items is overwhelming, but that's why we always need to balance between items that are easy to execute and those that may be more difficult. A perfect example of this balance is our new cone display tray versus our latest mini meals (*see adjacent photo*).

In the case of our cone display tray, it took us months to develop a four-foot-long tray that could hold up to

40 cones (sweet or savory) that can be used on a station, or with two people to pass through an event. The work to build and execute it may be more than your average display, but when people began pulling out their phones and taking pictures, I knew the effort was worthwhile. Since we put so much effort into the cone display, we decided to rent vessels for our mini meals. We worked with our local rental company to find dishes that complemented the colors of the dishes; opal blue glass plates gave a pop of color to our Falafel, Hummus, Roasted Beets and Pomegranate mini meal, while charcoal black rice bowls were perfectly suited to display the Grilled Octopus Salad on Lemon Pannelle with Chorizo Vinaigrette.

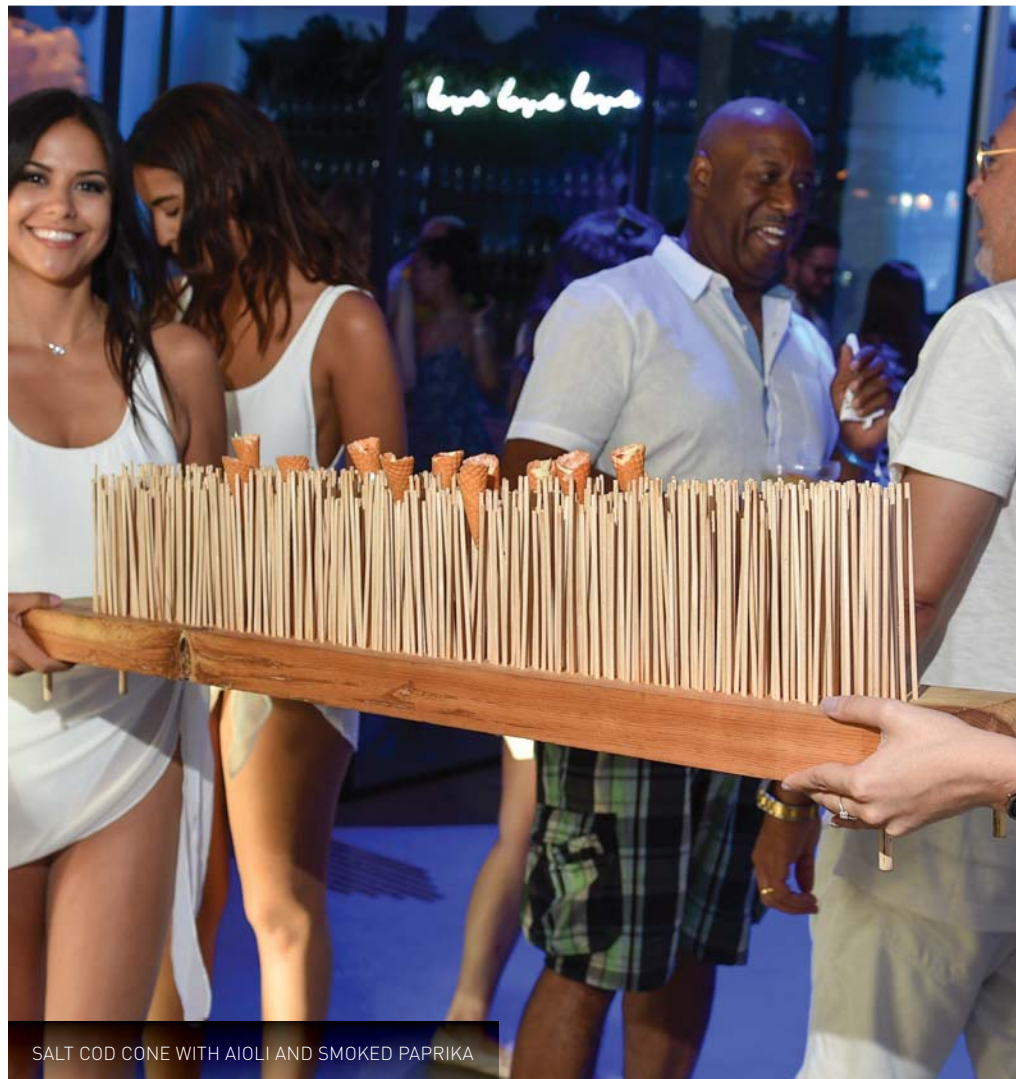
Champagne & sweets

One of the things I really love to do is combine cocktails and food at a single station. We paired prosecco with a selection of amazing sweets including simple Strawberries & Cream in mini martini glasses and Greek Yogurt with fresh berries in mini glass bowls (actually votive candle holders!) by Eatertainment, and then a massive selection of colored macarons, mini cakes, and tarts by Delysees Luxury Desserts (Toronto and Las Vegas)!

What really set the station apart was the champagne display that was made from 4 by 8 sheets of wood, wrapped in faux grass and affixed with champagne flute brackets (long pieces of wood cut to accommodate the glasses). This ties back to effort and cost of course, but keep in mind—even without the champagne flute display—if you simply offered trays of champagne alongside the sweets, you would be creating a dual-experience station that your client's guests will love!



KITCHEN RAW BAR WITH JUMBO SHRIMP, OYSTERS WITH MIGNONETTES AND LEMON WEDGES, & MEDITERRANEAN SEAFOOD SALAD WITH OCTOPUS, WHITE FISH, MUSSELS, CALAMARI, TOMATOES AND BASIL



SALT COD CONE WITH AIOLI AND SMOKED PAPRIKA



PORK LOIN GYRO IN A PITA WITH TOMATO, LETTUCE, ONION, CUCUMBER, HOT SAUCE & YOGURT SAUCE - PASSED IN TACO TRAY



WISTERIA OVER THE BAR



CHAMPAGNE & SWEETS STATION

EAT
ENT
AIM
M -
ENT

DOMIS
Small Hot
Candy/Pastries

RASPBERRY TARTS

EAT
ENT
AIM
M -
ENT

MACARONS



SEBASTIEN CENTNER



WATERMELON PICKS WITH FETA & OLIVE OIL

Insta-moments

A great Instagram moment is key to the success of most events and will turn every guest into an extension of your client and your own brand. Consider photo ops as essential and think about experiences that will immediately attract guests. Our latest two were the ‘ball pit’ photo booth that we created by emptying out a small boardroom, filling it with inexpensive beach balls, and then slapped a large vinyl logo on the wall as a backdrop. Once you add a photo booth (we chose one that offered pics and gifs) and a few accessories (we chose handheld signs and shots of vodka...) you can step back and watch as people share their experience with the world.

For a less ‘active’ photo opportunity, we turned the front entrance into a beach scene; an ideal spot for people to grab their own pics as they arrived. Whether small or over-the-top we know it’s all about the social media, so make sure to have at least one at every event you host.



MEDITERRANEAN GRAZING STATION WITH CARVED SERRANO HAM WITH QUINCE, HONEYCOMB, ALMONDS; LEMON & PEPPER CHICKEN SOUVLAKI WITH ROASTED EGGPLANT DIP / SPANAKOPITA; OLIVES, GRILLED ONIONS & PEPPERS, ARTICHOKE, ROASTED TOMATOES, FETA, DOLMADAKIA, MUSHROOMS, LEMON POTATOES, TABOULLEH, TYROKAFTERI, HUMMUS, TZATZIKI, PITA & FLATBREADS

Finally

I will leave you with this: you can continue to do things the way you always have. It will be less work for sure, but what does the long term look like? Raise the bar, re-invent yourself and your

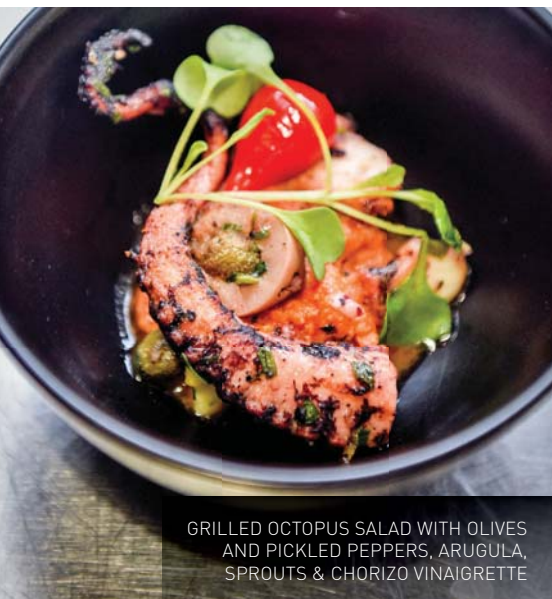
food, and even take a risk or two once in a while. When I booked a seven-foot-tall robot to come out at 11:00 p.m., followed by a parade of superheroes carrying shots of vodka, most of my team thought I had gone off the deep end. But



WHITE STRIPED VANILLA CHERRY
DELYSÉES 'POPSICLES'



FALAFEL & HUMMUS WITH ROASTED BEETS,
BAKED EGGPLANT & POMEGRANATES,
STRAINED YOGURT, HONEY & TINY GREENS



GRILLED OCTOPUS SALAD WITH OLIVES
AND PICKLED PEPPERS, ARUGULA,
SPROUTS & CHORIZO VINAIGRETTE

BEATS & EATS 2019 EVENT DETAILS

Venue: Eatertainment Events & Catering Headquarters (Toronto)

Date: July 24, 2019

Theme: Mykonos Beach House

Guest count: 300 app

Suppliers

Catering: Eatertainment

Desserts: Delysées

Photographer: George Pimentel

Videographer: Sean Sutherland

DJ: Spectrum Agency

Staffing: DGS Staffing

Tent: Event Rental Group

Florals: Bloom Plus

Tableware Rentals: Event

Rental Group

Furniture Rentals: Divine Furniture

A/V: Q Productions

Valet: Northern Valet

Robot: Tibots

Photobooth: PixelPic

Party recap

- Hunky lifeguard perched on a seven-foot-tall tall chair at the entrance.
- Names were checked off the list by bombshells in white one-piece swimsuits & sarongs, blue EAT branded wristband applied, and guests entered into the main space with mandatory photo in the beachy vignette. A 7' by 9' decal of a Greek beach was added to the windows with beach chair, palms, and plush pillows.
- Nautical-attired bartenders were positioned at either end of the bars while a massive Mediterranean grazing station was in the center encouraging guests to feast on freshly-sliced prosciutto, tapas, and lemon chicken skewers.
- Guests had the option of sampling the limoncello, a glass of rosé, or one of the many signature cocktails featuring ouzo and Malfy lemon gin. Twenty feet of purple wisteria hung from the rafters with the soft floral scent wafting through the air.
- A grassy backdrop with 120 champagne glasses defined the prosecco room. Other bubbly variations with blood orange juice and raspberry purée could also be found there. A dessert station of exquisitely tailored macarons & truffles from Delysées satisfied the sweet tooth for many that walked by.
- The 'glass box' boardroom was the picture perfect postcard photo opp we like to call 'balls deep' with 500 white and blue beach balls and SoPro Studios snapping the ideal gif. Guests were also encouraged to fill out their own Mykonos postcard to send their friends boasting their visit, which Eatertainment later mailed out. A great keepsake to receive a few days post-party!
- Lexx Decibel and Rick from Spectrum Agency were playing through the kitchen / boardroom and in the back beach area. The kitchen featured a seafood station with jumbo shrimp, ceviche, and oysters on ice blocks.
- The back alley was a Mykonos beach house with sleek white rattan furniture, seagrass rugs covering a sandy ground—yes, sand was brought in! A colorful fringe backdrop with gold gemstone peacocks provided more picture possibilities for those adventurous souls.
- The Mediterranean grazing station gave way to a stage midway through the event where one of our own Event Managers - Alyssa Seli - took the stage as hype woman with a couple back up dancers, followed by a lot of random events - insert Rocky Balboa, Super Girl, and Wonder Woman giving out vodka shots to the crowd ... and a robot (Tibot) with CO2 guns enters the party and blasts guests with confetti, taking the party back to the beach.

Menu

For a full list of the menu items, go to catersource.com.

look at the smiles on our guests' faces and the number of phones out ... maybe, just maybe, I'm not as crazy as I sometimes sound!

As always if you have questions, comments, or just want to say hi, please reach out! Bon Appetit! —*Sebastien* 