



feature * ACE FINALIST

ACE Award Finalists

EXCELLENCE *face of* in the challenges

by Linda Picone

The last couple years haven't been easy for many caterers. Some clients have cut back on—or even eliminated—events, both personal and corporate. The idea of Wow! has often been pushed aside as clients worried about presenting an image that might seem too flashy or opulent for the times.

But there's nothing a good caterer likes better than rising to a challenge. The finalists for the Catersource Achievement in Catering Excellence (ACE) awards briefly profiled here are only a few of the outstanding caterers across the country—and the world—who have shown that they can do great work no matter what the economy. *(to read an extended version of this feature go to www.catersource.com)*

The five 2009 ACE award-winners are the judges for this year's awards. Winners will be announced during the opening session of the Catersource Conference in Las Vegas.

INTERNATIONAL FINALISTS

BY WORD OF MOUTH CATERING AND EVENTS, Johannesburg, South Africa
www.bywordofmouth.co.za
 Karen Short, chair/owner

By Word of Mouth has been chosen as the best caterer in Johannesburg for the past 10 years in a public competition. It has been selected as the VIP caterer for the 2010 FIFA World Cup and, with a German catering company, has created a joint venture, One World Hospitality to carry that out. The joint venture and a design team have developed an innovative African gourmet menu, combining traditional African ideas with international food trends.

COUNTRY STYLE BBQ CATERING/GREAT EVENT CREATIONS, Martensville, SK
www.countrystylebbq.com
 Jessica, Gregg & Cherylie Winacott, owners and previous owner

Country Style BBQ has focused on marketing its catering efforts creatively, including creating its own ads. "We had a unique website up and running 10 years ago, when hardly anyone had a website. We recognized the importance of a presence on the web."

GREAT HALL CATERING, London, ON
www.greathallcatering.ca
 Michael Coleby, assistant director and executive chef

Great Hall Catering is a division of hospitality services at the University of Western Ontario. The company prides itself on quality, fresh ingredients, concern for the environment and new ideas. Great Hall was the first caterer in London, ON to introduce personalized ice carvings, discs and dishes into ❖

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menu design and presentation. Other "firsts" included interactive desserts, mini-tasting cones, use of edible flowers, mini vegetables, potato bars and more.

KRISTON FOOD AND BEVERAGE PTE

Ltd, Singapore
www.kriston.com
Jacquie Tan, CEO

Kriston Food and Beverage believes in contributing to the community, as well as being a high-quality caterer. Under its corporate social responsibility, it focuses on giving to the performing arts and to community programs that help integrate ex-inmates back into society after their release from prison.

VICKY CREASE CATERING & EVENTS,

Johannesburg, South Africa
www.vickycrease.com
Vicky Crease, founder

Vicky Crease Catering & Events does many unforgettable events, from a

Cartier "party of the year" to Nelson Mandela's 4664 Concert. "Stylish presentation as well as decadently abundant, flavorful creations which are spectacular in both their context and theming has become synonymous with our offering, with every national newspaper and magazine having featured our fantastic work and invitations to share our expertise regularly abound."

EAST FINALISTS

**BUFFALO ROAD CATERING/
AVANTI MANSION, Blasdell, NY**
www.avantimansion.com
Laurie Clark, founder

In a traditional community, Buffalo Road Catering took what customers were used to and gave it a new twist. "For example, we transformed the 'beef on weck' buffet staple into a bite-size hors d'oeuvre. Messy, but delicious Buffalo wings became a hand-

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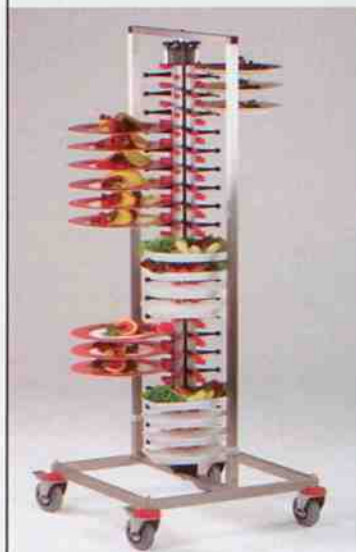


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passed shooter. Main entrées and accompaniments also received updates, which our clients loved."

ENCORE CATERING,

East Hanover, NJ

www.encorecateringnj.com

Karen Epstein Ciocciariello, vice president

Encore Catering has succeeded during a period of intense change by focusing on its customers and how best to serve them. "We have broken up the single entity of Encore Catering into four divisions to make it clearer who the customer is, and provided focused menus, party planning and other services to give the customer 'one stop' shopping."

THE JDK GROUP, Camp Hill, PA

www.thejdkgroup.com

Steve Sanchez, marketing director

The JDK Group has sometimes been willing to sacrifice profit in order to maintain its promise of quality "to

whomever we serve—global giants like the Hershey Company or the local Mechanicsburg client." The company sees itself as the Jaguar of the catering and event industry. "Our steadfast objective is to create leading-edge products displayed to perfection."

JODY'S PANTRY CATERING,

New Castle, PA

www.jodyspantry.com

Jody and Richard Wimer, founder and executive chef

Jody's Pantry Catering has worked with local organic growers to form a network from which to purchase. "The whole sustainable, 100-mile seasonal menu concept was completely foreign to our market, and we are establishing a presence as the go-to company for that type of menu service." The company also has introduced concepts such as small plates and action stations to the market.



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