



DEDICATED AND EDUCATED TO DELIVER CREATIVE EXCELLENCE AND PROFESSIONALISM IN SPECIAL EVENTS

in plain**w**o**r**d**s**

Holidays are Not Solely in December

By Kathy Del Medico and Chris Gasbarro

December is limited to just 31 days, only nine of which fall on Friday or Saturday. With two significant U.S. religious holidays requiring corporate human resources departments to be careful of religious overtones in the office, January has become a perfect landing spot for annual employee gatherings. From the planner to the attendee, January brings a little breathing room in everyone's calendar.

Corporations continue to place an emphasis on internal events to motivate, retain and assemble employees. How do you entice people to a holiday event after they are holiday'd out? Create an environment where they can reflect, relax and entertain all of their senses.

THE THEME

A creative take on the holidays leads to diverse event environments. Traditional Christmas themes are past their prime. Companies continue to look for a more generic interpretation of seasonal elements, colors, moods and landscapes. A "White Christmas" theme has become a "Holiday Stroll" or "Crystal Forest" theme, which may incorporate many of the same elements but allows greater creative expression. A "Winter Carnival" theme delivers interactive elements through games, entertainment and displays, giving guests a wintry feel.

THE FORMAT

Focus on flow and moving

people through the experience with touch points. From food to entertainment to games, make attendees a part of the event. Interactive food stations replace sit-down plated dinners, and lounge seating engages guests. Instead of limiting people to typical round seating, allow them to move throughout the event space. Guest interaction increases, improving ROI and enabling attendee networking.

Walk through the event as an attendee. Ask yourself if you are creating traffic-flow issues. Will everyone be able to get a drink in a timely manner? Is there enough space for your interactive activities? Do the lounge areas provide an opportunity for intimate conversations away from noise? Do guests have the option to be involved or not depending on their preference? Will guests leave having had the option to experience the whole event?

THE MESSAGE

With larger budgets dedicated to these events, organizers are looking for ways to bring corporate messaging into the space but not turn it into a sales meeting. Create a casual environment where employees can increase team spirit through play. A great off-season cost-saver is a holiday event at a ballpark.

If your company recently completed its best sales year



Happy holidays: A more generic interpretation of seasonal elements replaces traditional Christmas themes.

ever, take employees on a trip. Do your guests need a break? Rent out a spa or create your own. Offer a relaxing environment where work is not present, but it's the factor for which they are being thanked.

Celebrate Halloween by transforming your corporate headquarters into a haunted house. Create an original Thanksgiving supper at a long family-style table with all the fixings; have a Latin fiesta on Cinco de Mayo. Help create opportunities throughout the year to thank employees and clients, increase morale or get your message out. Don't save all of your festivities for December—celebrate throughout the year!



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A Unique Find: Australia's Belgenny Farm

By Glen Lehman, CSEP

Belgenny Farm is a 50-minute drive from downtown Sydney, Australia, in Camden—the birthplace of Australian agriculture and a country treasure. The property, which dates back to the early 1800s, is a working farm and in-demand event venue with Lehman & Associates promoting it to the corporate sector.

Belgenny's events are tailored to its clients, including team-building functions, native bush dancing and weddings. Particularly, the incentive market is a growing segment. The Granary, a room that seats 200 guests, is the principal venue for gala dinners, dances and other events. Sweeping level lawns accommodate hundreds more in marquees [tents].



The Far East meets Down Under: Belgenny offers a taste of Australia with traditional Aussie fare combined with Asian spices and cooking techniques.

CLIMATE AND CUISINE

Recent developments in outdoor heating equipment such as mushroom gas heaters aid in the venue's year-round functionality, and Sydney's relatively mild climate supports perennial events as well. The Granary has unobtrusive reverse-cycle air conditioning for

“Belgenny is a truly unique venue. There's an instant sense of occasion from the moment guests step out of their car.”

the winter and summer seasons.

Belgenny serves up modern Australian cuisine of light items, emphasizing reduced-fat dishes garnished with locally grown herbs and vegetables. Elements of traditional Aussie fare combined with Asian spices and cooking techniques, such as stir-fry, produces fusion dishes. Camden is renowned for its cheeses, honeys and wines. Sydney's Fish Market is reputed to be second only to Tokyo for the variety of its seafood, and guests often feast on oysters and fish from Australia's New South Wales waters.

AUSTRALIAN INSPIRED EVENTS

Lehman & Associates uses widely different themes for Belgenny's events. Authentic, original Australian-style affairs, using

all the assets of the farm, remain in steady demand. Activities include sheepshearing, working-dog shows, cow milking and Clydesdale wagon rides. Bluegrass and country bands get the Granary rocking. Buildings such as stables, a smokehouse, a creamery and a blacksmith's forge on the property are a testament to the self-sufficiency once required of the pioneers.

Lehman & Associates has a strong reputation for its off-site events, having used venues as diverse as the foyer of the State Theatre, abandoned warehouses and Sydney Olympic Park, among others.

Another event is Sydney's the “Variety,” the Children's Charity annual Christmas party. Here, roughly 5,000 handicapped and deprived children come together for a party that for a few hours fills the entire Sydney Exhibition Centre with light, color and music.

It's a massive logistical exercise due to the special needs of many wheelchair-bound and mentally handicapped kids in attendance. Typically, there are 500 volunteers assisting, along with 2,500 family caregivers. For many kids, this will be the sum of their Christmas celebrations, and Lehman & Associates is certainly happy to do everything possible to make it memorable.

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Getting to Know Industry Leader Robert Sivek

Robert Sivek, CSEP, CERP, of The Meetinghouse Companies Inc., believes if you structure life to be easier for other event pros, the entire industry will be better off. His involvement and leadership in the special event industry follows this reasoning.

At ISES Eventworld® 2007, held Aug. 16-18 in Montreal, Sivek was awarded the Klaus Inkamp, CSEP, Lifetime Achievement Award. As a leader who has made a long-standing contribution to ISES and the special event industry, Sivek has served ISES in nearly every capacity possible, including as a member of the International Board of Governors and the International Executive Committee, and as ISES Chicago chapter president and 2000-01 ISES International president. Read on to learn Sivek's take on the industry and the role ISES plays in it.

Q: What trends and developments have you noticed in the industry?

A: After many years of growing up, our industry is finally being recognized as a legitimate profession. Educational institutions are offering degrees, and there is an industry certification process. People who never understood what we do on a daily basis now not only understand but they wish they could be doing it. Recently Republican Congressman Peter Roskam of Illinois stopped by our design center to spend an afternoon discussing issues with our team. He also made a statement recognizing the industry: "The special events and equipment rental industry in Illinois—and specifically in the Sixth Congressional District—is an integral part of our growing economy with revenues totaling an estimated \$3.1 billion in Illinois alone," Roskam said. "Small businesses such



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as the 56 rental stores in my district are the backbone of our economy, and I will continue to fight to keep their taxes low while reducing employer healthcare costs."

Q: What strides have you made to enhance special event education and certification?

A: One of the credos I live by is "leave footprints." I believe if you do things to make it easier for people to follow you, the entire industry will be better off. So when I learn something, I use my capabilities to document it and make it easier for others to do the same thing with less effort. Hence, my teaching and PowerPoint presentations developed for study.

Q: How did you feel when winning the ISES Klaus Inkamp, CSEP, Lifetime Achievement Award?

A: Literally speechless. It wasn't until the end of ISES 2006-07 President Marty Janis' speech that I even grasped that I was getting the award. I can't believe they kept it a secret. Having known Klaus, it was a special honor for me. He did a lot for the industry, and to be honored with the award named after him meant a lot to me. I also know and respect the previous honoree, who is my business partner Deborah Borsum. It is a great company to be affiliated with.

Q: How has ISES helped you—and your business—grow and become more competitive?

A: Volunteering for ISES has taught me leadership skills. Before being involved, I was shy—I still tend to be—and would stay in a corner during meetings. Being a leader, I was taught to go out and mingle. Speaking in public to groups and learning to compromise are just a few skill sets ISES helped me develop.



Q: What do you think is the major issue facing the special event industry today that didn't exist previously?

A: The short-term nature of clients needs. We are seeing more and more events that need to be produced in weeks or days instead of months. I think this is a permanent change in the industry. We are unfortunately training our clients that they can wait until the last minute, and we will still pull through for them.

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ISES Columbus Says, Cleveland Rocks!

By Bill Ferguson, CSEP

The birth of any ISES chapter starts with a creative idea, dedication and promotion. ISES Columbus chapter members pooled resources, networking connections and a car ride north to host a mixer in July to promote ISES and explore the level of interest for a new chapter in its neighboring city, Cleveland.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum set the stage for the evening by rolling out the red carpet for 250-plus guests. Cleveland's own Executive Caterers provided hors d'oeuvre and a prepared-to-order guacamole station by an on-site chef. For the health nut with a sweet tooth, a tower of strawberries hit the spot. Guests enjoyed specialty martinis while exploring the museum, opened exclusively to ISES guests.



They love rock 'n' roll: The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum gathers more than 250 guests.

Designs of Distinction and Event Source provided the decor with colorful tie-dye linen, chic white furniture complete with hot pink carpet, and a custom bar with

lava lamps on top. To enhance the setting, florist Steven Tokar supplied floral arrangements with floating rose topiaries.

Cleveland event pros greeted the ISES event with open arms. "We were very excited for this opportunity to work with ISES and network with hundreds of people in the industry," says John Bibbo Jr., Event Source president. "Having ISES in Cleveland will give us the chance to really come together as a city for the betterment of our industry."

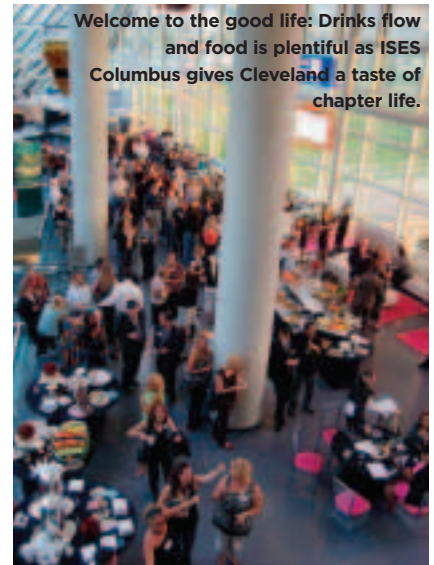
Entertainment kicked off with an outrageous performance from

Lounge Kitty—a solo performer who embraces cabaret, jazz, blues and humor. The Jerry Bruno Orchestra gave a great musical performance of contemporary pieces.

Jenny James, ISES Columbus vice president of programming, secured the appearance of Miss Rickey, a drag queen who greeted guests with a big kiss. "All of the

entertainment was absolutely phenomenal, and we couldn't have pulled it off without the cooperation of event suppliers from both Columbus and Cleveland," James says.

The event's success was about members and local professionals networking, and even more, gaining awareness of ISES and the development of a new chapter in Cleveland.



Welcome to the good life: Drinks flow and food is plentiful as ISES Columbus gives Cleveland a taste of chapter life.

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