



West Belmont Place Introduces Its New Tasting Menu

The reception division of National Conference Center tried to expand its clientele.

By [Jennifer Arezzo](#) | May 26, 2011

Sitting up on a hill in the old Xerox training center building is Leesburg's best-kept secret party location, [West Belmont Place](#). But changing its status from secret to trendy is the goal for West Belmont, the reception division of the [National Conference Center](#), which has been catering to corporate and social events for years.

"This place was unknown for years," said Chef Craig Mason. "We want people to know we're here and are available for all types of events."

On Wednesday night, West Belmont Place showcased its culinary panache in a tasting that utilized locally purveyed foods and demonstrated the kitchen's talent. It was one of many free tastings that the caterer offers to current and prospective clients each year.

"We have a mix of business, corporate, wedding and social event clients that attend our tastings. It's a chance for us to create a special, seasonal menu and show people what we can do," said Sharon Meyers, Director of Catering.

Wednesday's tasting featured fresh and local produce, cheese, sausage, soft shell crabs and wine.

Lori Corcoran, Corcoran Vineyards' owner and wine maker, was at the event offering a tasting of several of the vineyard's wines.

"I'm happy that the National Conference Center is integrating with local businesses," she said. Corcoran works with the local farmers markets and since 2004 has been urging other reception venues to focus on using local products as well.

Of the 2,000 meals served each day at the National Conference Center, 20 percent of the ingredients are local.

Chef Mason used produce from a farm in Winchester to present an array of salads, including asparagus salad, mercantile field greens salad and fresh chopped spinach salad with strawberries. He also incorporated several action stations into the tasting to accommodate attendees' palates

and provide food-oriented entertainment. The risotto station offered a selection of fresh vegetables enabling clients to customize their dishes.

“We’re flexible,” Mason said about the banquet staff. “We can customize menus so that we are a good fit for anyone.”

Mason also demonstrated how to cook soft shell crabs three ways: sautéed, deep-fried and grilled. The dessert portion of the evening proved quite enticing, featuring an assortment of tropical sorbets served in hollowed-out fruit shells.

Holly Blackett, an event planner from Maryland, keeps coming back to West Belmont’s tastings because of the food.

“I couldn’t pass up the opportunity,” she said. “The food is excellent and it’s a beautiful venue.”

Dave Edwards, who specializes in planning nonprofit events, has hosted events at West Belmont Place in the past. He came to the tasting to experience the banquet food.

“I love the stations, there is a good selection of wine and am impressed with the facilities,” he said.

At the end of the night Greg Spiller, the NCC’s director of sales, boasted his team’s talents.

“I would put our banquet food and service up against any of the competition,” he said.

The next tasting at West Belmont Place takes place July 13 and will feature more choices of produce from more farms.

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