



## **NEWS**

For Immediate Release

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### **West Belmont Place at The National Conference Center Offers Insight into Food and Beverage Trends for 2016**

**LEESBURG, Va., March 3, 2016** – As one of the largest event venues in the nation, West Belmont Place at The National in Leesburg, Va. has hosted thousands of events in recent years. John Walsh, director of food and beverage at West Belmont Place and The National Conference Center, has extensive experience. Here are some trends that Walsh is seeing in 2016:

- **Fresh-and-local continues to be highly sought after.** “It may sound overused but the public wants fresh, local food. Our guests are delighted to learn that they’re not only getting healthy food but they’re also supporting local farms,” said Walsh. Healthy, simple, good food is always in style. It is sometimes a challenge since The National can serve upwards of 2,400 meals a day but Executive Chef Chris Ferrier rises to the challenge and sources from many local farms.
- **Hand-made, hand-crafted is big.** Hand-crafted cocktails, artisanal foods, handmade pastries and desserts are all part of the latest trend. Classic cocktails with a modern twist have become the rage.
- **Small plates and small bites are popular.** Guests prefer to try many small bites as opposed to one heavy, sit-down meal. Consider doing tapas types of food stations where guests can try a variety of different items. Be sure to include vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free choices as now requested by a growing number of people.
- **Themes help to make it memorable.** Event hosts should consider holding themed events that blend healthy, innovative and fun menus that reinforce the theme or messaging within the event.
- **Drama contributes to the experience.** West Belmont Place at The National has a special cocktail that appears to be smoking and receives rave reviews and lots of interest. The property has outdoor grilling locations so, if weather permits, your event could include a host of dramatic outdoor grilling items. Special events are also fun when you add a cooking segment. You could plan to have the West Belmont Place executive chef make a special dish for your guests and demonstrate how he makes it; or, have West Belmont Place’s award-winning sommelier conduct a wine tasting. All of this just adds to making the event memorable and the food and cocktails special.
- **Guests want to connect over food. Make it interactive.** Food stations; potato, pasta, salad (with exotic ingredients) and dessert bars; all of these get the guests interacting with the food station’s personnel, the chef and each other. West Belmont Place also has the capability of creating a chef’s table—a more intimate setting for smaller events.

- **Guests want to be a part of the experience.** Create opportunities to engage your team members in the cooking experience. Hold a cooking class, food or wine tasting. Break a larger group up into teams and have each team cook a dish.
- **Tell a story.** West Belmont Place sources from area farms and can tell the story of the food with information about the farm. Guests not only want to know where their food comes from but they like to know the story. Include information on farms sourced at food stations or on small table cards. And the story is not just about the source of the food but also about the chef, the sommelier and the people involved. It's all about the experience—socialization, engagement, the food, the people, the setting.

Each month, West Belmont Place at The National hosts a Chef's Table event exclusively for event planners in the Washington D.C. area. The special evening features an eight-course meal with wine and cocktail pairings and showcases many of the exciting options for events at West Belmont Place. If you're a meeting, event or wedding planner interested in attending, please contact Kara Harmon at [kharm@conferencecenter.com](mailto:kharm@conferencecenter.com) or 703-724-6250 for additional information or if you would like to register to attend. Advance registration is required for all guests.

#### **More about West Belmont Place at The National**

*Located on a 65 acre campus in Northern Virginia, West Belmont Place is 12 miles from Dulles International Airport and 35 miles from Washington, D.C. With a 16,552 square foot ballroom, patios and courtyards as well as the West Lawn, West Belmont Place is the largest ballroom and events center in Northern Virginia. In 2013, West Belmont Place was named Best Venue by the International Special Events Society. With its adjacent sister property, the National Conference Center, the property provides the perfect venue for weddings, special events and trade shows as well as corporate meetings. The National Conference Center is one of the largest and most comprehensive conference centers in the nation, with 917 guest rooms and over 265,000 square feet of meeting and group function space. The National Conference Center and West Belmont Place is owned by NCC PS Enterprises LLC, a venture between PCCP, LLC and Stoneleigh Capital, LLC., which retained LaKota Hotels & Resorts to oversee all aspects of the day-to-day operations. For more information about West Belmont Place Event Center call 703-729-8000 or visit [www.westbelmontplace.com](http://www.westbelmontplace.com). For information about The National Conference Center call 800-640-2684 or visit [www.conferencecenter.com](http://www.conferencecenter.com).*

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