



HOTEL CONTESSA™

Suites on the Riverwalk

JUNE 2007 □ □VOL. 1

Summer in San Antonio: Hotel Contessa Shares Tips and Trends for Business Events

Welcome to Hotel Contessa's quarterly newsletter that focuses on meeting tips and trends.

Located in San Antonio, TX - a hotbed for meetings and conventions - Hotel Contessa boasts a knowledgeable events staff that is well-versed in the likes and dislikes of meeting planners and business travelers. In each newsletter, we will sit down with one of the hotel's experienced special events experts to discuss trends.

Meet the Expert

Who: Sara Plaster, Manager Conference Planning and Catering at Hotel Contessa

What are the most popular color schemes for décor at the moment?

SP: Chocolate and espresso browns are a trendy base to work with right now. The browns are easy to pair with a rainbow of bright shades like blues, greens, pinks and corals.

What are some unique team building ideas for corporate meetings?

SP: It's all about teamwork. Activities focused on volunteerism are one of the newest trends I'm seeing now. Companies are teaming up with local non-profit agencies to get employees out in the community to do some good. Another unique way to bond with co-workers is hands-on cooking lessons. In the home, the kitchen is always the most relaxed and social place. Nothing strikes up better conversation among friends (or co-workers) than making a meal and sharing it together. Chef Derek Fontenot, of the hotel's restaurant Las Ramblas, is full of personality and culinary know-how. His cooking lessons have been a hit with meeting planners.

Talk about food and drink trends.

SP: We are located on San Antonio's River Walk, so it's difficult to escape the lure of chips, queso and Margaritas! When in Texas! We also work with the River Walk's fleet of riverboats to coordinate meals executed by our chef at the hotel's restaurant, Las Ramblas, to be served on the boats. Good food and great scenery is a relaxing way to spend the evening - especially after a day of meetings or convention events. Las Ramblas is a Spanish-inspired restaurant, so it's safe to say we have the best tapas on the River Walk. A happy hour that boasts tapas and sangria is the perfect canvas for a night of mixing and mingling.

Recreation-wise, how do meeting attendees like to spend their off time at the hotel and in San Antonio?

SP: At the hotel, the new spa has been a favorite destination within the hotel. Plus, it has treatments to appeal to both men and women. We recently had a meeting planner ask for a private game room. We rented pool tables, arcade games and air hockey and set up a game room for meeting attendees to hang out in. It was definitely a hit. In San Antonio, you can't beat Alamo tours, riverboat tours, golf and shopping.

Event memorabilia - what are some new ideas for parting gifts/favors?

SP: Think local. Who really needs a new pen, t-shirt or mug? We recently sent out of town meeting attendees home with a local cookbook from the Junior Fourm of San Antonio. It was definitely appreciated.

About Hotel Contessa

Celebrating the region's unmatched storied heritage as a fusion of cultures, Hotel Contessa pays homage to the best of San Antonio, incorporating modern interpretations of its unique architecture, hospitality, cuisine and lifestyle. The 240,000-square-foot, 12-story hotel features 10,000 square feet of state-of-the-art meeting and event facilities, a full-service spa, a dedicated fitness center and rooftop swimming pool, as well as a gourmet restaurant and lounge that give leisure and business travelers a true taste of the new San Antonio. Hotel Contessa embodies Benchmark Hospitality's more than twenty-five years of innovation and excellence in the operation and development of premium hotels, resorts and conference centers. The property is located at 306 W. Market. For more information or to make your reservation, please call 210-229-9222 or log onto www.thehotelcontessa.com.