



This story was written during one of the busiest times of the year for caterers. While some of our finalists were not able to contribute to the story, we'd like to recognize them for their achievement: **Scranton's Restaurant & Catering** of Pascagoula, MS; **Puff 'N Stuff Events Catering** of Orlando, FL; and **Bingeman's** located in Ontario, Canada.

Catersource would like to thank all the companies that participated in the 2009 ACE Awards.

Catersource launched the **Achievement in Catering Excellence** (ACE) awards in 2008. The ACE awards showcased the best caterers from across the US and internationally as they were recognized for innovation, sales and marketing expertise, ability to overcome challenges, human resource management, business management, high standards of ethical and moral behavior and their contribution to the catering industry and their own community.

The six 2008 winners are now the judges for the 2009 awards and have worked hard to select finalists from the 57 submissions we received for our second annual awards. The 25 finalists for the 2009 ACE Awards, five from each of five regions, tell us what inspires them and share some of the innovative ideas that make them an ACE finalist.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Mentor, OH

President/Owner:

Bonnie J. Matthew

innovation

Our culinary team hand trims over 1,800 pounds of boneless skinless chicken a week. Not only do we increase our yield, the trimmings are also used to create lean and healthy menu items. And, Food for Thought's off-premise events incorporate a recycling program.

inspiration

Ideas come from so many sources including weekly brainstorming management meetings, Catersource, the desire to be a green caterer and create quality, healthy low-cost options for our many repeat clientele, and a research and development budget for experimenting with different foods and preparations. Our customers come first and we have built our business around their needs.

BY WORD OF MOUTH DESIGN

Johannesburg, South Africa

Owner: Karen Short

innovation

We are a "one-stop" shop with our own hiring, florist, staff, venue, sport division and catering department. The presentation of our food, service and quality set us apart from every other company. Both owners are intricately involved in all aspects of the brand.

inspiration

We attend the Catersource conference and tradeshow annually, subscribe to every single industry-related magazine available and try to learn from other caterers' mistakes and innovations. Our design team has a



dining-out budget to experience new and upcoming restaurants and as a team we also attend various expos and food shows.

WATERS FINE CATERING

San Diego, CA

Andrew Spurgin: Executive

Director and Executive Associate:

Courtney Gallagher

innovation

We developed a signature Mis en Place System, a procedure that defines what "lives" at the party site. We also created Club Plate service, a fluid version of station dishes served in a tray-passed style. In going green, we use products that are organic, sustainable and local. And, Fine Foods To-Go (menu options for sit-down, delivery or to go) uses 100 percent biodegradable, sugarcane and cornstarch products and bio-fuel.

inspiration

Our cuisine is truly inspirational, as is the wealth and bounty from our local farmers, ranchers, fishers and artisan purveyors. We are humbled by our clients' hopes, dreams and visions.

EXCLAMATIONS CATERING & EVENT SPECIALIST

Greensboro, NC

Owner: Anna Galloway-Currie

innovation

In 2008, Exclamations Catering introduced "le points," a new corporate program. As a high-end and social caterer in our market we must consistently show value for every dollar spent by our clients. In introducing "le points," corporate clients can earn points as part of a "frequent buyer" program.

inspiration

The source for this program was the ever-changing economy and the need for Exclamations to show appreciation for client loyalty in these uncertain times. Corporate clients can use "le points" for more corporate events or personal events (with the company's permission). *