

tid bits

The monthly newsletter for the Distinguished Restaurants of North America

March, 2006

strategic partner news

Apply for the SPIRIT Awards

The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) and *Nation's Restaurant News* (NRN) have teamed up for a second year to present a joint awards program honoring outstanding employee satisfaction. For additional information about the 2006 SPIRIT Awards or to complete an application/nomination, please visit www.nraef.org/solutions/awards/spiritawards.asp.

IH/M&RS Gold Key Award Entries

The International Hotel/Motel & Restaurant Show® (IH/M&RS) invites hospitality designers to submit entries for the 26th annual Gold Key Awards for Excellence in Hospitality Design. These awards are presented in eight categories – Restaurants/Casual Dining, Restaurants/Fine Dining, Lounge/Bar, Best Hotel Design, Guest Rooms, Suites, Lobby/Reception Area and Spa. The entry form will be available online at www.ihmrs.com/goldkey, beginning April 17, 2006, and must be submitted by July 1, 2006.

DiRōNA To Present At NRA Show on May 22

We would like to invite you to support your fellow DiRōNA restaurateurs and attend our panel presentation at the NRA Show in Chicago this May! DiRōNA will present a panel on Monday, May 22, at 10:00 a.m., "How You Too Can Operate a Top-Notch Restaurant: Tips From the Distinguished Restaurants of North America." The NRA Show, which will be held in Chicago, May 20-23. For more information, please visit www.restaurant.org/show/index.cfm.

Santé Restaurant Symposium

Santé introduces the *Santé* Restaurant Symposium, May 7-10 at the Equinox Resort & Spa in Manchester, VT. It is the first national trade conference designed to address the educational needs of professionals in the upscale restaurant market. As an event partner, DiRōNA will lead two panel discussions. You are invited to join us at the Symposium at a discounted rate of \$995 per person (regularly \$1195). For more information or to register, visit www.isantemagazine.com.

DiRōNA Appreciates Our Partners

Gold:

Guest Informant

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member news

Chris Ricchi to be Honored at Gala

DiRōNA board member and past chair, Chris Ricchi of i Ricchi, has been named the recipient of the 2006 Dream Maker Award at Riverview School on Cape Cod, where she serves on the Board of Trustees. This award is given annually to an individual who has had a profound impact on the advancement of young men and women with learning disabilities and will be presented at Riverview's Village of Dreams Benefit on Friday, June 16. Ricchi has been a tireless volunteer for the School where her son Dan attends and has been a driving force behind the annual Gala that features some of the country's greatest chefs. The event has raised over \$3 million for Riverview over a seven-year period. Congratulations Chris!



Chris Ricchi

Be Included in this Section

Please send us your press releases or add us to your newsletter list. Send your news to Julie Shamrock at jshamrock@kellencompany.com

save the date

Sante Restaurant Symposium

May 7-10
(DiRōNA's Panels are May 8 and 10)
Manchester, Vermont
www.isantemagazine.com

The National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show

Chicago, IL
May 20-23
(DiRōNA's Panel is Monday, May 22 at 10 am)
www.restaurant.org/show

DiRōNA Scholarship Luncheon

Chicago, IL
May 23

16th Annual DiRōNA Awards and Educational Conference
October 22-24

DiRōNA update**PR Opportunities**

Are you currently a member of DiRōNA's PR Program? For more information about the Program and how you can take advantage of these great opportunities, email Julie Shamrock at jshamrock@kellencompany.com

- We are updating our Web site and are looking for photographs of DiRōNA restaurants.
- There are more "experts" needed for the Ask the Experts section on www.dirona.org.
- Consumers are requesting more recipes! Send us a recipe you would like to share.
- Let us know if you are interested in being a featured restaurant in our consumer *Tidbits*, which is sent monthly to nearly 1,000 consumers across the globe.
- Have you been in business 20 years or more? If so, please let us know and we can include you in an upcoming pitch to the media.

Celebrate 2006 with the new DiRōNA Guide

We encourage you to use the Guide to your advantage to help promote your restaurant and all DiRōNA restaurants. Questions about participating in the Guide? Call Maria Tufts at 212.756.5183.

DiRōNA Week – Save the Date

Plans are underway for a successful Second Annual DiRōNA Week! Please mark your calendars for August 21-25 and keep an eye on your mail for more information. This year, DiRōNA restaurants will again have the opportunity to showcase their unique menus while raising funds for an important cause. Participants in DiRōNA Week 2006 will offer a special prix fixe menu, donating a percentage of the proceeds from that menu to Share Our Strength. Last year, DiRōNA's charitable efforts drew the attention of local and national media, including dozens of daily newspapers, the CBS Early Show and television stations in Panama City, Kansas City and Honolulu.

Thank You for Your Help!

DiRōNA would like to thank all the restaurants that donated gift certificates for the raffle at our booth at the **South Beach Food and Wine Festival**. There were over 30 gift certificates raffled off from DiRōNA restaurants across the country and the Grand Prize was a DCS by Fisher & Paykel grill. Stay tuned to the Spring issue of *Distinguished Dining* for photos from the Festival.

ask the experts**Venison, Squab, Pheasant and Wild Boar**

Chef Michael Weisshaupt from The Manor in West Orange, NJ will answer questions about game meat this month. *Submit a question by clicking on the "Ask the Experts" link at www.dirona.org.*



The Manor in West Orange, NJ

Guest Interaction and Technology

We would like to thank Alex Brennan-Martin, President of Brennan's of Houston and Lewis Schrock, CEO of GuestBridge for answering questions this past month. *Archived questions and answers can be found at: http://www.dirona.com/ask_the_experts_archive.html.*

Q: *What are some examples of questions restaurants should ask their guests to have better customer service?*

A: There are questions, and then there are observations. Every staff member who interacts with your guests on the phone and in the restaurant should be instructed on both. Regarding questions, first and foremost, "Is this your first visit to our restaurant?", so you can make new guests feel welcome and you don't irritate your returning customers by repeating what they already know. Next, ask if this is a special occasion. If it is, try to get the exact date of the occasion (birthday, etc.) so you can put it in the guest's profile for next year. Serving staff should ask if the guests have any allergies or preferences the kitchen should be aware of. Again, this information should be stored in the guest's profile for future visits. Then there is observation. Each staff member should be trained to watch the guests for cues to help make this and future visits more personalized. Do they request a booth rather than a table? Do they ask for limes instead lemons for their iced tea? These types of preferences should be documented in the guest's profile. On the next visit, the reservationists, host and server can be armed with the information previously gathered, and the guest will be amazed and gratified at the personalized service they receive. This translates to more return visits and great word of mouth for the restaurant.

contact us

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