

THE PREFERENCE IS CLEAR.

HYATT'S FLEXIBLE BANQUET MENUS ARE A HIT AMONG MEETING PLANNERS AND ATTENDEES ALIKE

Freedom of choice. Since 2005, it's a right that has been extended to more than 100,000 guests who have enjoyed Hyatt Hotels & Resorts' exclusive Personal Preference Menus—the innovative banquet solution that allows diners to make their own dinner choices.

“When we discuss Personal Preference Menus with our clients, the first response is ‘Wow, you can do that?’” says Troy Wood, director of catering & convention services at Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa in Santa Ana Pueblo, N.M. “Often a client is planning grand closing dinners or special occasions as part of the booking, and that’s when Personal Preference Menus are a perfect fit.”

Ken Pickle, manager of Incentives & Conferences at Safeco Insurance Companies, immediately recognized the advantages of Personal Preference Menus for the President’s Banquet at the conclusion of Safeco’s 2006 Conference of Champions at Hyatt Regency Tamaya.

“This was our final banquet for 650 guests,” he says. “Normally they don’t get a choice because it can be a challenge just to cook 650 of the same thing for a banquet.”

But Wood’s catering team met the challenge—just as they have for each of the Personal Preference banquets they’ve hosted—with a menu that included entrée selections such as panko & pepita-crusted halibut fillet, pan-seared breast of chicken with prickly pear/mint chutney and grilled filet mignon with black truffle demo glaze.

“Ken’s attendees were consistently saying that they had their banquet elsewhere in the past, and no one matched up to us,” Wood says.

Says Pickle: “One of the objectives of our incentive programs is to do something special. We like our attendees to ask themselves, ‘How will they top this?’ That was the case for this banquet.”

That’s one of the reasons, Pickle adds, that he’ll keep Personal Preference Menus in mind in the future.

“It was a nice way to conclude our event, and definitely worth the expense,” he says. “If we ever have the option again, we’ll do it.”



“I know that I won’t please all of my participants all of the time, but the Personal Preference Menu definitely gets us closer to achieving that goal.”

—Jackie Staat
Director of Training
RARE Hospitality Inc.

PLEASING THE EXPERTS

Along with the high return on investment, Personal Preference Menus bring high expectations—especially when the banquet guests are food-service professionals themselves.

That was the case when Jackie Staat, director of training at RARE Hospitality Inc., which includes LongHorn Steakhouses and The Capital Grille, selected the Personal Preference Menu option for the company's 2006 meeting of 550 guests at Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress Resort in Orlando, Fla.

“As a meeting planner, trying to feed 550 restaurant people and make them all happy is impossible to do when you can offer only one plated option,” Staat says. “Inevitably someone is going to go hungry that night, or have to order room service later, because you’ll have some who are allergic to seafood, some who don’t eat red meat, some who are vegetarians and some who just won’t like what you choose.”

Hyatt’s innovative menus eliminated those potential pitfalls.

“We used the Personal Preference Menu for our awards banquet,” Staat says. “It’s a special occasion, and I want it to be a special evening for everyone.”

It was particularly important to impress Staat’s group of restaurant operators.

“Consistently providing a high level of service is very important to everyone, but especially in our industry,” Staat says. “It’s something that we constantly discuss at our meetings. My group was very pleased that they were able to choose their own entrée. They loved it.”



PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT

Personal Preference Menus, a chainwide Hyatt exclusive, give banquet diners a choice. Here’s how the menus work:

- Meeting planner selects one appetizer and one salad in advance to be served to each attendee.
- Meeting planner also chooses three entrées from a selection of six.
- At their tables, attendees may pick from these three entrées or a vegetarian option.
- A dessert sampler is also included.

GUESTS ARE IN CONTROL

Staat notes that a key aspect of Personal Preference Menus is that banquet guests are in control.

“As a service provider myself, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to offer my guests a choice,” she says. “It gives the participant a sense of control, which generally leads to higher guest satisfaction. When I hear from my people that they ‘don’t like the food,’ it typically refers to what food was offered. It usually has nothing to do with the overall quality of the offerings, but the menu presented to them. I know that I won’t please all of my participants all of the time, but the Personal Preference Menu definitely gets us closer to achieving that goal.”

AN EASY DECISION

That, Staat says, makes it an easy decision to use Personal Preference Menus again.

Regarding RARE Hospitality’s 2007 meeting at Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort & Spa: “The fact that the hotel that’s the venue of our meeting is able to provide a great product for such a large group is definitely impressive,” Staat says. “I’ve already requested Personal Preference Menus for our meeting this year.” ■