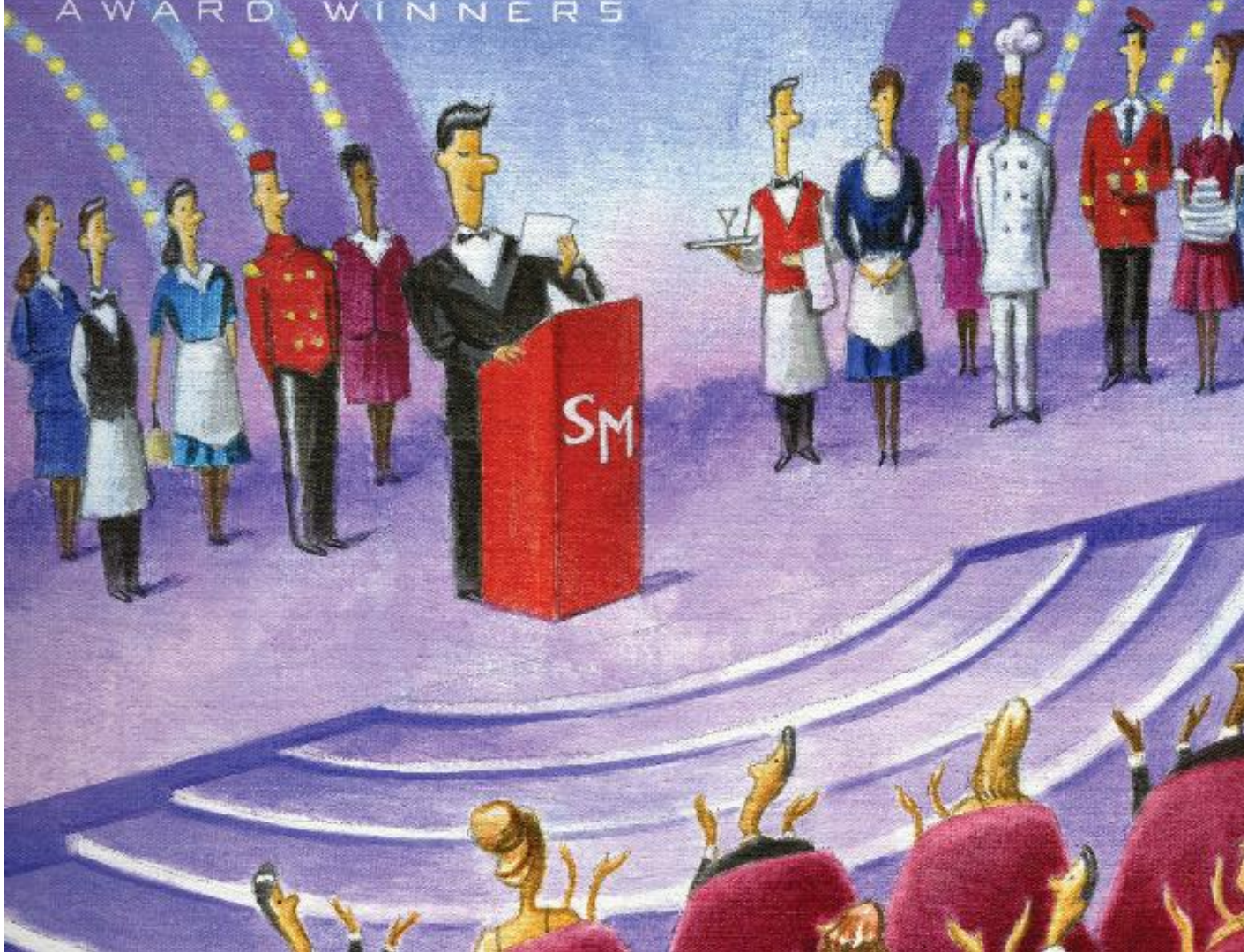


# Smart meetings

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WASHINGTON STATE



# FROM THEIR FORK (AND CORK) TO YOURS

A look at Washington state's vibrant F&B scene

BY CAROLYN KOENIG

It's no secret that the state of Washington remains on the cutting edge of food and beverage trends, from farm-to-fork and artisan beers to fish-to-fork and handcrafted cocktails. And nowhere is that more apparent than in the range of dining and drinking establishments available for meeting planners to provide their groups with delicious and memorable experiences.

It's no secret, either, that these culinary and mixology experiences have become an ever-growing line item in a planner's budget. In fact, looking ahead to 2016, a recent Carlson Wagonlit Travel report projects that F&B will continue to be a significant driver of per-attendee budget, based on a 2.9 percent

increase in costs between 2014 and 2015. This trend is fueled by rising food and labor costs, of course, and by increased attendee expectations, neither of which is expected to decrease in the near future.

Balancing budget with quality dining experiences can be a tricky proposition, but destinations with a wide variety of options may make it easier for planners to walk that line—and have the best chances of thriving as the meetings and events industry stays focused on food-related experiences.

Washington houses exciting venues throughout the state that capture the vibrant F&B scene from the perspectives of planners and attendees.



*Clockwise:*  
 Duke's Chowder House, Tacoma;  
 The Pike Brewing Company, Seattle; Charles Smith Wines Jet City, Seattle



Duke's Chowder House photos by Ingrid Pope-Sheldon

**Seattle**

"A little bit of everything goes into Seattle's current culinary scene. It is fresh local ingredients, award-winning regional wines and innovative chefs serving up meals farm-to-table, upscale or down to earth," says Kelly Salling, director of sales for **Visit Seattle**. "Whatever you're looking for, either personally or for your group, Seattle brings it to the table."

**The Pike Brewing Company**

In an era in which respected craft brewers are selling out to large conglomerates, The Pike Brewing Company remains fiercely independent. Located next door to Pike Place Market, it's close to the convention center and downtown hotels.

**Details:** This popular, pioneering brewery en-

compasses two flexible spaces: Microbrewery Museum and the brewery, each capable of hosting 25 to 300 people. Pike Brewing allows buyouts of the pub for groups of 300-500, and collaborates with its neighbors to host several thousand. Seasonal menus featuring local, sustainable and craft options are fully customizable.

**Charles Smith Wines Jet City**

This brand-new venue, located in Seattle's Georgetown neighborhood, was opened by one of the best winemakers in Washington. The space was formerly a Dr Pepper bottling plant and features a view of the main runways of Boeing Field and Mount Rainier.

**Details:** Jet City has two tasting rooms: the main floor, designed with a rustic Northwest feel (up to 50 guests) and the larger upstairs space, with a retro '60s vibe (maximum of 80 guests). Both tasting rooms will be available for private events and buyouts starting in January 2016. The venue, which offers light food in the tasting rooms (the emphasis is on the wine), works with a group of preferred caterers for private events.

**Westward**

A new, award-winning restaurant located directly on the north shore of Lake Union, water-inspired and nautical-themed Westward offers views of the lake and Seattle's skyline.



**Details:** The restaurant features a contemporary Northwest and Mediterranean menu that, along with its beverage menu (including signature cocktails), can be customized. Event options include the Atrium (accommodates 24 seated, 30 for a reception); Little Gull Oyster Bar, a semiprivate space (14 seated, 30 reception-style); and the full restaurant (a limited number of buyouts with outdoor tenting and heating are available for groups as large as 150). Patio dining is available during the summer months.

## Bellevue

Seattle's nearby neighbor, Bellevue, was ranked among the 10 Best Foodie Cities in the United States in 2015 by livability.com. Enough said.

## Cast Iron Studios

Singled out as one of the three coolest new event spaces by *Seattle* magazine, this intriguing venue is located in the heart of downtown Bellevue.

**Details:** Cast Iron Studios is composed of two adjoining spaces that are available together or independently: the Grand Hall (128 seated, 150 standing) and the Private Room (70 seated, 80 standing). The caterers for the venue are three nearby restaurants featuring various cuisines—Purple Cafe and Wine Bar, Barrio Mexican Kitchen & Bar and Lot No. 3—plus The Commons in nearby Woodinville (15 minutes from Bellevue). For groups of up to 500, a full buyout of “The Corner,” which includes Cast Iron, Purple Cafe and Lot No. 3, can be arranged. All three of these spaces are internally connected.

## Novelty Hill-Januik Winery

Housed in an architecturally stunning building in Woodinville, this winery has expansive gardens, an outdoor patio, a bocce ball court and fire pits.

**Details:** The property's numerous venues include the Tree House (room for 16 guests), Cellar Room (26 guests), and Terrace Room (100–120 seated



## MOBILE MAVENS

### Q: When is a food truck not a food truck?

A: When it's in Seattle. There, it's a pop-up retro camper or bike cart.

Enter Mobile Mavens, a new type of mobile dining option owned by chef Danielle Custer and catering partner Michelle Clair. Their original fleet included Biscuit Box, offering flaky, buttery biscuits; Pop Up (bike pops), serving a selection of gourmet ice-cream pops, sandwiches, gelatos and more; and GaiBox, featuring Asian chicken-and-rice dishes.

Now added to the mix are Lil' Blu, a converted 1968 Volkswagen van modified into a vintage mobile saloon with bar stools and a karaoke machine, as well as its sidekick, Half Pint, a mini-trailer used

to keep beverages ice cold. A third, Picnic, inspires bring-your-own-blanket dining with hearty sandwiches or barbecue items served from its retro camper.

Each truck can serve approximately 200 people, at an average rate of 80 per hour. All menus are completely customizable and can be adjusted to accommodate dietary and allergy restrictions. Their compact size allows them to easily visit locations not normally accessible by traditional food trucks.

Several trucks means options. “Our fleet can mix and match to meet the needs of special events, weddings and meetings,” Custer says. “We can send them out to street locations, pair them up or bring the entire fleet together to create a street-food park.”

Westward photo by Sarah Fitzard; Mobile Mavens photo by Clare Barboza



Clockwise: Westward, Seattle; crab cakes at Cast Iron Studios, Bellevue; Mobile Mavens, Seattle

and 200 standing). Its in-house culinary team specializes in New World Mediterranean menus that are fully customizable. Added perks include hands-on opportunities for cooking classes, wine appreciation seminars and culinary events. It is available for full buyouts.

### Bellevue Brewing Company

This fun venue in the Eastside area is the only brewery in Bellevue with private and semiprivate meeting and event space for large groups.

**Details:** BBC can accommodate 265 in the taproom and 200 in the brewhouse. The brewhouse and the three hospitality rooms (seating 14, 14 and 36) can be reserved, but they do not permit a buyout of the entire space. It's possible to customize menus (there's an onsite kitchen), and many dishes

## ROLL THE DICE

For attendees who have an itch to put some cash on the line, Washington's casinos offer up the excitement of gaming along with top-tier food and beverage options.

**Tulalip Resort Casino**, about 37 miles north of Seattle, houses seven eateries that serve everything from flavors of the Northwest islands at Tulalip Bay to handcrafted sandwiches at Carvery. Seafood lovers will relish fresh-caught fare from the Pacific Ocean at Blackfish, and Journeys East, as the name implies, features flavors from all over Asia. Of course, there's a buffet with all the traditional casino staples at Eagles Buffet.

**Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort** is accessible only by boat (including the ferry) from Seattle, or by car via Tacoma. The ride is worth it for those hungry for authentic Northwest cuisine. The Clearwater restaurant uses locally sourced ingredients for specialty dishes such as foraged mushroom risotto and cedar-wrapped salmon. Thursdays at Longhouse Buffet feature the crab trio of snow, royal king and Dungeness crab, in addition to a huge variety of desserts to satisfy your sweet tooth.

**Meet First. Explore Later.**

With nearly 250,000 sq. ft. of meeting space (including the newly renovated Meydenbauer Center) and over 4,900 hotel rooms just 9 miles east of Seattle, Bellevue, Washington is the perfect place for your next meeting. But Bellevue's not all business...Experience our top-rated restaurants, vibrant nightlife, shopping, arts, and many outdoor activities. Learn more at [VisitBellevueWashington.com/meetings](http://VisitBellevueWashington.com/meetings).

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## WE'LL DRINK TO THAT

"Shaken, not stirred"—everybody knows how Agent 007 likes his martinis prepared. While this classic cocktail and others (including Manhattans and sidecars) are enjoying a renaissance, the hottest trend today is innovative craft cocktails created by bartenders using unexpected combinations of spirits and making their own infusions.

This generation of bartenders has spurred what's being called the Second Gilded Age of Cocktails, a phenomenon found across the country. Washington state is no exception.

David Wondrich, drinks editor for *Esquire* magazine, once credited Seattle bartender Murray Stenson as being the person "mostly responsible for the emerging Northwest craft cocktail." At that time, Stenson, a local legend, won a prestigious Tales of the Cocktail Spirited Award as best bartender in America. This year, Seattle also made news, as the Spirited Award for World's Best Spirits Collection went to Canon, a bar owned by Jamie Boudreau, who is also on the craft cocktail forefront.

However, everyone involved in the cocktail culture today owes a debt to Jerry Thomas, a New York bartender who wrote *How to Mix Drinks, or the Ban-Vivant's Companion*, first published in 1862. But the word "cocktail" (referring to an alcoholic drink) is even older, having been immortalized in print for the first time on May 13, 1806 in *The Balance and Columbian Repository* newspaper in Hudson, New York. The rest, as they say, is history.

Above: Duke's Chowder House, Tacoma; right: INCA After Dark, Spokane

incorporate the brews. The venue also maintains relationships with all local event rental houses to coordinate delivery and setups.

### Spokane

The second-largest city in Washington, Spokane is the hub of the inland Northwest. It is also one of 2015's six great small cities in the country for food lovers, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

"One of the reasons why Spokane is such a great meetings destination is the fact that we have a really dynamic culinary scene," says Shannon Shannon, **Visit Spokane's** director of sales. "From our James Beard-recognized chefs to The Cork District, food trucks to the Inland Northwest Ale Trail, there is truly something for every palate."

### Stacks at Steam Plant

Two iconic, 225-foot-tall smokestacks (which can be custom lighted) mark Spokane's historic Steam Plant. The restaurant is tucked among the plant's catwalks, pipes and boilers, which are visible throughout the venue, offering ambience galore.

**Details:** Customized menus (Northwest American cuisine) can include dishes made with beers from the onsite brewery. Stacks features four distinct private dining rooms: the Board Room (up to 20), Boiler (24); Commons (50-80); and Centennial Room (40 seated, 60 cocktail). Buyouts are available.

"We can do all sizes of parties, from one-on-one power meetings to large, classroom-style func-

tions," says Tim Denniston, general manager of Steam Plant.

### Barrister Winery

An award-winning winery based in downtown Spokane, Barrister is housed in a 100-year-old warehouse that features high ceilings, exposed brick walls and weathered beams.

**Details:** Three locations in the winery are available for buyouts: Barrister's Gallery for up to 225 guests; Winery Courtyard, an outdoor urban garden (the season is May 1-Sept. 30) for up to 90 seated; and Barrister's Barrel Room (also May 1-Sept. 30) for about 30 seated. The winery works with Beacon Hill Catering & Events, which provides French-influenced Northwest cuisine.

### INCA After Dark

This innovative "venue" is really a program dubbed INCA After Dark, and serves as the Inland Northwest Culinary Academy's evening and weekend program at Spokane Community College. Utilizing the academy's teaching kitchens, INCA designs classes to suit your company's needs—including team building-type situations (think "Chopped" and "Margaritaville Grill—Tacos and Margaritas," programs they have produced in the past). You'll be jumping on the bandwagon here: According to a 2015 report on food trends by the International Association of Conference Centres, culinary team building is very in-vogue right now.

**Details:** Classes, which max out with 20, begin

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with appetizers and a glass of wine. Students don their aprons, then the chef-led, hands-on class begins, ending with the feast its participants have created. The program is available year-round, and the menu can be customized.

## Tacoma

While Tacoma has snagged a few spots on Guy Fieri's TV show, *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*, planners

### RESOURCES

- **Travel Tacoma + Pierce County**  
traveltacoma.com
- **Visit Bellevue Washington**  
visitbellevuewashington.com
- **Visit Seattle**  
visitseattle.org
- **Visit Spokane**  
visitspokane.com

have plenty of other options to experience the city's food and beverage scene.

### Duke's Chowder House

Duke's Chowder House restaurants continue to reel in the accolades. It received the highest seafood restaurant rating in the state of Washington from Fish2Fork, a leading evaluator of worldwide seafood restaurants. The restaurants were also recently awarded a 100 percent sustainable seafood volume compliance from Smart Catch. Tacoma is one of several Duke's locations to benefit from the recognition.

**Details:** Duke's private event space is located just off the main dining room, overlooking Commencement Bay and Thea Foss Waterway. It seats up to 70 guests for customizable sit-down and buffet menus. Full buyouts are possible but infrequent; it's buffet-only for groups larger than 30.

### The Hub

Popular with locals for its craft brews, artisan pizza creations and bicycle-themed atmosphere, this restaurant is part of Harmon Brewing Company's net-

work of locally owned restaurants and pubs in the greater Tacoma area.

**Details:** The Event Space is The Hub's fully private banquet and dining facility for up to 84 guests seated and 100 reception-style. The Tap Room Back Room features a 12-foot projection screen, stage and full sound system with iPod hookup. According to Danielle Lusk, banquet coordinator, the room is a semiprivate space (due to the shared restrooms and stairwell access to The Hub) for up to 45. The menu is customizable and can include everything from casual finger foods and pizzas to a more formal dinner.

### A Bevy of Options

Washington state can point to Seattle as a star on the national foodie trail, and its other major cities more than hold their own when it comes to trend-setting F&B. With the state's vast and varied agricultural bounty, the Pacific Ocean in its backyard and a wealth of talented artisans of all stripes, Washington is worth considering when you're seeking a big, delicious bang for your buck. **SM**

**MEETINGS THAT INSPIRE TRANSFORMATION**

[LeMay - America's Car Museum]      [Northwest Trek]      Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center

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## MAJOR MEETING VENUES

### Bellevue

#### Hyatt Regency Bellevue

Recent \$5.2 million renovation included upgrades to guest rooms in 381-room Cascade Tower; 732 total guest rooms; 70,000 sq. ft. of event space, including 20,279 sq. ft. of prefunction space and 36 meeting rooms.

#### Meydenbauer Center

Recently completed \$12 million renovation; refreshed 54,000 sq. ft. of meeting/event space; technology upgrades; new Northwest-inspired menu and creative-custom presentations.

#### Seattle Marriott Bellevue

Downtown hotel opened in July; 384 guest rooms; 21,000 sq. ft. of meeting space including 6,240-square-foot grand ballroom; M-Club Lounge can be transformed into event space; Amuse restaurant features hyper-local ingredients. ▼



#### The Westin Bellevue

AAA Four Diamond property; 337 newly renovated guest rooms; 21 event venues totaling 25,000 sq. ft.; spa; heated indoor pool; near Bellevue Collection's upscale shops and restaurants.

### Seattle

#### Bell Harbor International Conference Center

Waterfront venue with views; 100,000 sq. ft. of meeting and event space, including 12,000-square-foot Elliott Hall; adjacent to less-traditional 20,000-square-foot Maritime Event Center.

#### Hilton Seattle

Connected to Washington State Convention Center via a walkway; 239 newly renovated guest rooms; 6,000 sq. ft. of flexible event space; close to major corporations; complimentary parking; three blocks from light rail.

#### Motif Seattle

Forbes Four-star property located in the heart of the city; 319 guest rooms and 10 suites; newly opened Frolik Kitchen + Cocktails features American cuisine with a Northwest Pacific flair; Executive Conference Floor offers 10,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, including 6,000-square-foot ballroom.

#### Sheraton Seattle Hotel

Contemporary high-rise in heart of downtown; steps from Washington State Convention Center; 1,236 guest rooms; 75,000 sq. ft. of meeting space; two ballrooms; 15,000 sq. ft. of prefunction and breakout space. ▼



#### Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort

Located in Suquamish, next to Bainbridge Island; 85 guest rooms and suites; 30,000 sq. ft. of indoor and outdoor meeting and event space, including 20,000-square-foot ballroom and seven meetings rooms.

#### The Edgewater

Waterfront location on Puget Sound, near Port of Seattle and 1.5 miles from Washington State Convention Center; 223 guest rooms; 10,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space; Six Seven restaurant serves fresh seafood.

#### Tulalip Resort Casino

12-story hotel casino located on tony San Juan Island; 370 guest rooms and suites; 30,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting and reception space accommodates up to 1,500; seven restaurants; Canoes Cabaret offers live entertainment.

#### Washington State Convention Center

Located in the heart of downtown Seattle; 205,700 sq. ft. of flexible exhibit space; 45,000 sq. ft. of carpeted ballroom spaces; 57,000 sq. ft. of carpeted meeting space.

### Spokane

#### DoubleTree by Hilton Spokane City Center

Located along Spokane River; connected by skybridge to convention center; adjacent to INB Performing Arts Center; 375 guest rooms; 21,000 sq. ft. of function space; two restaurants.

#### Northern Quest Resort & Casino

Northwest's only AAA Four Diamond casino resort; 250 guest rooms; 22,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space, 16,000 of which is dedicated conference rooms; cigar bar; nightclub; spa.

#### Spokane Convention Center

Recently completed \$55 million expansion; 650,000 sq. ft. of space, including 120,000-square-foot exhibit hall, three ballrooms, 270-seat conference theater; views of Spokane River and Riverfront Park.

#### The Davenport Grand, Autograph Collection

Newly opened hotel connected to Spokane Convention Center via skybridge; more than 62,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space; 18,000-square-foot ballroom; 716 guest rooms; 200-seat rooftop terrace bar; spa.

#### The Marcus Whitman Hotel & Conference Center

Located in Walla Walla; 133 guest rooms and suites; 13,000 sq. ft. of meeting and event space; flexible setup options accommodate groups between 10 and 450; The Marc Restaurant serves Pacific Northwest-influenced cuisine.

### Tacoma

#### Cedarbrook Lodge

Recently renovated Northwest-style property; five minutes from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA); 169 guest rooms; 18,000 sq. ft. of indoor meeting space; 5,500 sq. ft. of outdoor space; spa; complimentary breakfast. ▼



#### Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center

Located 20 miles south of SeaTac Airport; easily accessible by Tacoma's free light rail; 119,000 sq. ft. of flexible event space, including 50,000-square-foot column-free exhibition hall.

#### Hotel Murano

Boutique property near convention center; 320 guest rooms; 28,000 sq. ft. of art-filled meeting and event space; spa; private dining for 50 in Gallery and 36 in restaurant's private dining room.