

Vibrant Occasions Catering Earns National Recognition for FUSION360° Culinary Experience

Arkansas catering company's FUSION360° culinary experience earns national recognition for international fusion cuisine and community impact.

LITTLE ROCK, AR, UNITED STATES, February 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Vibrant Occasions Catering](#) has been named a finalist for the prestigious [2026 ACE Award](#) for Catered Micro Event of the Year, presented by Catersource + The Special Event. The nomination recognizes FUSION360°, an intimate culinary experience that showcased international fusion cuisine while supporting [Arkansas Foodbank](#).



Vibrant Occasions Catering's FUSION360° event named 2026 finalist for Catered Micro Event of the Year. Featured in this photo: East Meets West Pork Belly. Photo by Lori Sparkman Photography.

"We are deeply honored to be recognized again by the ACE Awards, especially for an event that so authentically represents who we are as a company," said Chef Serge Krikorian, managing partner and executive chef at Vibrant Occasions Catering. "FUSION360° allowed us to showcase the international fusion cuisine we've become known for while bringing together Arkansas's innovative event industry and supporting our community through the Arkansas Foodbank."

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Mary Krikorian

FUSION360° was an intimate culinary experience for 15 tastemakers including media professionals and VIPs, held at Rusty Tractor Vineyards in Little Rock, Arkansas, on

August 28, 2025. The event showcased international fusion cuisine through a five-course journey across Italy, Lebanon, India, Turkey, and France, with each course featuring innovative dishes that blended cultural traditions with American techniques.

The evening began with three passed hors d'oeuvres, each representing cultural fusion: East Meets West Pork Belly (crispy pork belly glazed in sweet and savory sauce, served atop sushi rice with Asian slaw, paired with CYRIL COPERÉT Fleurie from Beaujolais, France); Bayou Wanderer Taco (Cajun shrimp taco topped with Bayou Bengal Sauce and lime slaw, paired with Gunderloch Dry Riesling from Germany); and Mediterranean Embrace Dates (Medjool dates stuffed with Chevre, wrapped in applewood-smoked bacon, paired with Domaine Lequin Bourgogne Chardonnay).

The Global Harmony Collection featured five plated courses, each representing a different country's cuisine blended with American culinary traditions:

1. Italian-American Fusion: Southern Serenade Caprese featuring sweet Georgia peaches, heirloom tomatoes, and creamy burrata with fresh basil and balsamic glaze, paired with Domaine La Cadenière Vallons d'Escaze Rosé from Provence, France.

2. Lebanese-American Fusion: Beirut Sunset Trout, oven-roasted Delta rainbow trout served with Arabian chimichurri and tahini sauce, paired with Comte de la Chevalière Sancerre from Loire Valley, France.

3. Indian-American Fusion: Spice Route Pot Pie, curried chicken pot pie with flaky crust and creamy curried chicken filling, paired with Borell-Diehl Gewürztraminer from Germany.

4. Turkish-American Fusion: Ottoman Harvest Ribs, braised short ribs marinated in aromatic seasonings and slow-braised, finished with pomegranate molasses, crushed pistachio, and



Vibrant Occasions Catering's FUSION360° event named 2026 finalist for Catered Micro Event of the Year. Featured in this photo: Southern Serenade Caprese, the Italian-American fusion first course. Photo by Lori Sparkman Photography.



Vibrant Occasions Catering's FUSION360° event named 2026 finalist for Catered Micro Event of the Year. Featured in this photo: Spice Route Pot Pie, the Indian-American fusion third course. Photo by Lori Sparkman Photography.

sumac onions, paired with 2011 Château Dassault Grand Cru Classé from Bordeaux Saint Émilion, France.

5. French-American Fusion: Bourbon Boulevard Tart, apple tart draped with Kentucky Bourbon Sauce, paired with 1976 Pineau des Charentes from Cognac, France.

Each dish name was carefully chosen to tell a story of cultural connection, representing the journey of flavors across continents and the harmony created when different culinary traditions meet to create something extraordinary together.

Each course was paired with international wines selected by François Guilloux of VINO Distribution, creating a complete sensory experience. The evening incorporated immersive elements including country-specific projections, coordinated uplighting, music curated by Central Arkansas Entertainment's DJ Jellybean, and floral arrangements by Rose of Sharon Floral Design Studio representing each culture's botanical traditions.

"What made FUSION360° special was how it combined culinary artistry with cultural storytelling," said Mary Krikorian, managing partner of Vibrant Occasions Catering. "Every element from the food to the florals to the visual presentations, worked together to transport guests on a journey around the world, demonstrating how thoughtfully combining different cultural traditions creates something



Vibrant Occasions Catering's FUSION360° event named 2026 finalist for Catered Micro Event of the Year. Featured in this photo: Ottoman Harvest Ribs, the Turkish-American fusion fourth course. Photo by Lori Sparkman Photography.



Vibrant Occasions Catering's FUSION360° event named 2026 finalist for Catered Micro Event of the Year. Featured in this photo: Bourbon Boulevard Tart, the French-American fusion fifth course. Photo by Lori Sparkman Photography.

extraordinary."

The event was captured by Lori Sparkman Photography and Weaver Films, with event planning by Meredith Events. In keeping with Vibrant Occasions' commitment to community impact, FUSION360° supported Arkansas Foodbank through a food drive and presentation during the event, demonstrating how micro-events can combine exceptional culinary experiences with meaningful community engagement.

Chef Serge, who was born in Lebanon and moved to the United States as an adult entering college, has become renowned for his international fusion cuisine—blending ingredients and techniques from various cultures to create innovative culinary experiences. This signature approach reflects his Lebanese heritage combined with Southern hospitality and years of culinary exploration.

The 2026 ACE Awards will be presented during Catersource + The Special Event on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, on the Culinary & Keynote Stage in Los Angeles. Winners will be announced during an enhanced recognition program featuring visual storytelling and celebration of finalist achievements. The full list of 2026 ACE & Gala finalists was published to the Catersource website (www.catersource.com) on January 20, 2026.

For more information about Vibrant Occasions Catering or to schedule a consultation, visit vibrantoccasionscatering.com or call (501) 408-2111.

Photography in this press release by Lori Sparkman Photography.

About Vibrant Occasions Catering:

Chef Serge Krikorian and his wife, Mary Krikorian, started their catering business in 2002 and have been in the family restaurant business since 1994. Having catered thousands of events over the years as Dinner's Ready, they launched Vibrant Occasions Catering, a new name that more accurately depicts the level of food and service provided at weddings and social events. Krikorian was born in Lebanon and moved to the United States with his family as an adult entering college. He now hails from the quaint town of Benton, Arkansas. His southern hospitality paired with his penchant for developing unique international fusion-style recipes, especially sauces, has garnered his reputation as foodies' fan favorite in his community and now on the Youtube space for his cooking show, Cooking with the Kriks. After years of dreaming about owning a mobile kitchen, in December 2020, Serge and Mary launched Our Mobile Kitchen with the intention of providing fresh, 5-star quality chef-prepared cuisine on site for catered weddings and social, private or corporate events. Krikorian is an alumnus of Henderson State University where he studied business earning his Bachelor's Degree and met his wife, Mary. He earned his MBA from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. Serge became a restaurant entrepreneur when he purchased an old, run-down pizza parlor he and Mary revived called Sergio's Pizza. After a few years, they knew the restaurant business was not for them. Mary booked their first official catering gig, much to Serge's surprise. They began receiving more and more requests for

catering luncheons and events. The catering business took over after six months and they never looked back. They have three sons who often work in the business around their academic and career schedules, making their enterprise a family-built business.

To explore the array of catering options offered at Vibrant Occasions, please contact:

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