

Vibrant Occasions Catering Wins 2026 Catered Micro Event of the Year for FUSION360°

Arkansas catering company honored with ACE Award at national gala in Los Angeles for innovative culinary experience, marking second ACE Award win.

LOS ANGELES, AR, UNITED STATES, March 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Vibrant Occasions Catering](#) was honored with the [2026 ACE Award for Catered Micro Event of the Year](#) at the Awards for Catering Excellence gala held during Catersource + The Special Event on March 3, 2026, in Los Angeles. The award recognizes FUSION360°, an intimate international culinary experience that combined innovative fusion cuisine with immersive cultural storytelling and community philanthropy. This marks the second time the Benton, Arkansas-based catering company has won this prestigious award, having previously won in 2024 for "Dinner on the River."

The ACE (Awards for Catering Excellence) Awards represent the highest honor in the catering and events industry, presented annually at Catersource + The Special Event, North America's leading conference and tradeshow for catering and event professionals. Winners are selected by a panel of anonymous industry expert judges based on achievement in event design, execution, and innovation.

"We are deeply honored to win this award 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."



Chef Serge Krikorian of Vibrant Occasions Catering holds the 2026 ACE Award for Catered Micro Event of the Year at the Catersource + The Special Event ACE Gala in Los Angeles on March 3, 2026. Photo credit: Catersource + The Special Event / ACE Gala.

FUSION360° was an intimate culinary experience for 15 Arkansas tastemakers including media professionals and VIPs, held August 28, 2025, at Rusty Tractor Vineyards in Little Rock. The event showcased international fusion cuisine through a five-course journey representing Italian, Lebanese, Indian, Turkish, and French traditions blended with American techniques and ingredients.

The evening began with three passed hors d'oeuvres representing cultural fusion: East Meets West Pork Belly (crispy pork belly over sushi rice with Asian slaw), Bayou Wanderer Taco (Cajun shrimp taco), and Mediterranean Embrace Dates (bacon-wrapped dates stuffed with Chevre).

The five-course Global Harmony Collection featured Southern Serenade Caprese (Italian-American fusion with Georgia peaches, heirloom tomatoes, and burrata), Beirut Sunset Trout (Lebanese-American fusion with Arabian chimichurri and tahini sauce), Spice Route Pot Pie (Indian-American curried chicken pot pie), Ottoman Harvest Ribs (Turkish-American braised short ribs with pomegranate molasses and sumac), and Bourbon Boulevard Tart (French-American apple tart with Kentucky bourbon sauce). Each course was paired with international wines selected by François and Kellee Guilloux of VINO Distribution.

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Serge Krikorian

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.

The event incorporated immersive elements including country-specific projections showcasing landscapes from each featured nation, coordinated uplighting that shifted colors throughout the evening, music curated by Central Arkansas Entertainment's DJ Jellybean, and floral arrangements by Rose of Sharon Floral Design Studio representing each country's botanical



Chef Serge Krikorian of Vibrant Occasions Catering welcomes guests during the FUSION360° culinary experience held August 28, 2025, at Rusty Tractor Vineyards in Little Rock. Photo credit: Lori Sparkman Photography.

traditions and symbolic meanings.

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

FUSION360° demonstrated how micro-events can combine exceptional culinary experiences with meaningful community impact. The event supported Arkansas Foodbank through a food drive and presentation by Arkansas Foodbank's Director of Community Engagement, Claire Tiffin, in recognition of Hunger Action Month. Arkansas ranks first nationally for food insecurity, making the partnership particularly meaningful.

Chef Serge, who was born in Lebanon and moved to the United States as an adult, brings authentic cultural perspective to international fusion cuisine. His Lebanese-American background provides insight into Middle Eastern flavors while his American culinary training allows him to create respectful fusion dishes that honor traditional preparations while incorporating contemporary techniques and local ingredients. This signature approach reflects his Lebanese heritage combined with Southern hospitality and years of culinary exploration.

The event was captured by Lori Sparkman Photography and Weaver Films, with event planning by Meredith Events. Additional event partners included Rusty Tractor Vineyards (co-host and venue), VINO Distribution (wine consultation), Rose of Sharon Floral Design Studio (floral design), Central Arkansas Entertainment with DJ Jellybean (music and lighting), and Arkansas Foodbank (charitable partner).

Vibrant Occasions Catering's dual ACE Award wins in the Catered Micro Event of the Year category (2024 and 2026) demonstrate consistent excellence in creating intimate, high-impact experiences that combine culinary innovation and storytelling with strategic event design. The recognition positions the Arkansas-based company among the world's leading catering innovators and showcases the state's sophisticated culinary and events industry on a national stage.



Vibrant Occasions Catering team member serves East Meets West Pork Belly during the FUSION360° culinary experience in Little Rock on August 28, 2025. Photo credit: Lori Sparkman Photography.

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

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



Beirut Sunset Trout is presented during the FUSION360° culinary experience by Vibrant Occasions Catering at Rusty Tractor Vineyards in Little Rock on August 28, 2025. Photo credit: Lori Sparkman Photography.



François Guilloux of VINO Distribution speaks about the evening's wine pairings during the FUSION360° culinary experience at Rusty Tractor Vineyards in Little Rock on August 28, 2025. Photo credit: Lori Sparkman Photography.

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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