



By: Joy Gutierrez

Photos Provided By: Michael Christensen

I had the opportunity of sitting down with Michael Christensen, owner of Chef's Elegant Catering. As this company is fairly new in the Albuquerque area, this gentleman has an extensive resume. Michael is a certified chef from the Culinary Institute of America and obtains over eighteen years experience in catering. Michael has participated in over 50 culinary competitions both nationally and internationally and currently obtains over ten gold metals, six silver metals and thirteen bronze metals for his outstanding culinary skills. He also has worked in over twelve restaurants, four of the Grand Casinos and has assisted in the opening of the famous Stratosphere and Paris Hotel and Casinos in Las Vegas, NV. As Michael is no stranger to working in a kitchen, he continually strives to provide excellent customer and catering service to each client.

NMEWP: What Services do you provide?

Michael: Catering primarily; I also have a network of individuals I work with providing services from event/wedding planning, ice carvings, entertainment, wedding cakes and banquet halls.

NMEWP: What made you decide a career in catering?

Michael: By accident; I actually started off with Job Corps and then



branched off from there. I had worked for various casinos and hotels. After reducing my hours from full to part-time eventually I had to come to a decision on working for myself. I obtained a restaurant license, permits, and eventually purchased a truck to provide off-site catering services.

NMEWP: What types of events do you cater for?

Michael: My specialty is for off-site events. This past year I catered for the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, with approximately 500 people in attendance. I've also catered for weddings; the average attendance has been approximately 250 people. I have also catered various events both public and private from business locations to events in individual's homes. Events I have catered for vary from holiday parties, weddings, birthday parties, graduations, retirement parties, luncheons, and business meetings.





NMEWP: What type of food selections do you offer?

Michael: We offer a wide variety of food selections for breakfast, lunch and dinners. We also can provide vegetarian menus, low-sugar menus, and low or no sodium menus. We also can make recommendations on menu selections for individuals with food allergies. Because we use only the freshest ingredients, we are able to customize our menus to meet our client's needs.

NMEWP: Do you offer a tasting prior to each event?

Michael: Each client can have a tasting or sampling of the menu prior to their event or wedding, but it must be scheduled in advance.

NMEWP: What type of dessert menu do you provide?

Michael: I do provide a dessert menu that consists of a variety of desserts. I provide a dessert menu from something as simple as ice cream to a cookie and brownie assortment to assorted mini cheesecakes and much more.

NMEWP: Do you provide beverages or a bar?

Michael: We are able to provide a variety of beverages with your catering. We also can provide bartending for your wedding or event.

NMEWP: Do you cater weddings and what advice can you provide to brides to be?

Michael: We do provide catering services for weddings. We have catered weddings from the small home wedding to weddings that exceed 250 guests. I do recommend that brides contact me between six to four months prior to their wedding date to ensure we leave no detail behind.

NMEWP: Do you provide wedding cakes?

Michael: Yes we do. I have a great individual I work with who pays extra attention to detail with her wedding cake designs. She works with each bride ensuring that the cake meets each bride's expectations.

NMEWP: Do you provide consultations?

Michael: Yes we do. We provide a free consultation so we can sit down with each client and ensure that we are basically, on the same page. We want to provide the best service to each and every client, so a consultation in some cases is actually highly recommended depending on the complexity of the wedding or event.

NMEWP: Do you have any recommendations?

Michael: Ask questions. No question is a dumb one. Even prior to a consultation, take some time to write your questions down and bring them when we meet. If additional questions come up later on, write them down and ask. Also, think of the, "what if," scenarios. Things happen and it's better for us to be prepared for the, "what if," situations than to not have a plan b.



Being able to expect the unexpected is what Chef's Elegant Catering has had to deal with time and time again. Being prepared for the unexpected and having a backup plan if something does not work out, goes to show what great experience this event and wedding professional obtains. No matter if you need a caterer for a business luncheon or breakfast, a party at home or a wedding, this catering company is ready to be on time, on target and on budget.

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