

Tips Resorts Can Use Immediately

Build Guest Relations One Gingerbread House at a Time

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Spice Up Your Holiday Activities

If your resort doesn't already have a seasonal tradition during the holidays, now is the time to start one. The benefits of traditions are many. Traditions are unifying, create bonding opportunities, and a sense of comfort and belonging. They help us to celebrate the things that really matter and offer the chance to make lasting memories while taking time for connection. Establishing an annual tradition for your resort guests just might make their

tradition to visit your resort their reason to come back year after year!!

Creating A Longstanding Tradition

Gingerbread dates as far back as 2400 BC with the Greeks. However, the gingerbread we know with the spicy and sweet mix was developed in the 15th century. The confection rose to popularity in England during the 16th century when Queen Elizabeth I served gingerbread cookies to visiting dignitaries. Houses first appeared in Germany, decorated with gold leaf. The Brother's Grimm propelled the popularity of the cookie houses when they penned the story of Hansel and Gretel. Following the story of lost children finding a house made entirely of candy, in the 19th century, millions have figured out how to make that dream a reality.

If You Build It, They Will Come Back

As an Architect
this is one of my

favorite seasonal activities, so share the joy of building together this holiday. Today there are endless techniques for building and decorating gingerbread houses. No matter the capacity of your resort, the eatable house making tradition is within reach. Strategies for building can be implemented for guests in their independent units, as an "All Are Welcome" event, or a kid's program workshop. Building houses can be done throughout the entire month of December for all guests, for one week of the month, or a single day. Resort units with kitchens have a leg up on the competition!! In suite ovens mean travelers can bake their own gingerbread!

No matter your approach, the best plan is to plan! Create or purchase kits with all the essentials and deliver to your units as a jolly welcome for your guests. Your kits can be made available upon request or at your staff run event. Pre-packaged kits are a great shortcut at a reasonable price. A more zealous approach would be to provide all ingredients and tools along with a favorite recipe and detailed instructions for every step of the process. The internet

is ripe with all kinds of resources and inspiration.

The fun of gingerbread building is sometimes more about the building and the candy than it is about the gingerbread. Graham crackers can be substituted for the cookie – they already come in manageable bricks and there is less pressure if something breaks. All that's left to add is icing and candy. Lots of candy!

Make The Most Of It & Get Social About It!

Whatever tactic you choose, make the most of the opportunity to connect. Perhaps a member of your staff or a regular guest has a tried-and-true recipe they are willing to share for your kits. Or you can go the way of connecting travelers to the local community by forging a partnership with a local pastry chef. Perhaps they share a recipe, prep dough for your kits, or make special appearance at your event.

Give participants a chance to share their creations. When displaying guest-made houses in your lobby is not practical, social media provides the perfect



stage. Provide instructions for builders to share their creations, while tagging your resort and using a unique hashtag for your gingerbread house tradition. Sweet holiday fun can expand your reach and generate great publicity.

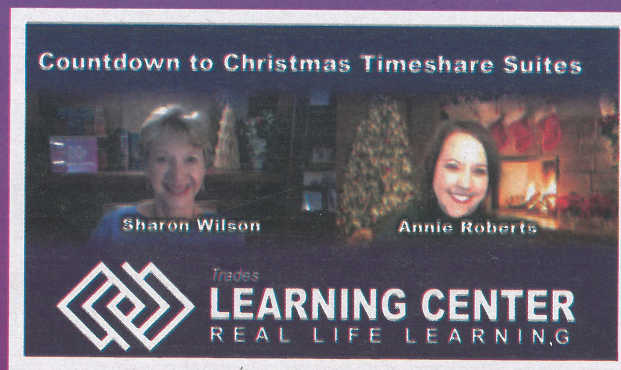
And if you are up to super marketing--commission a custom gingerbread house of your resort for display. Why not revive the old sales tool of sharing a scaled model of your resort with potential owners – this time made of gingerbread! This is another chance to collaborate with a local business that would be happy to create some good will. A skilled pastry chef can create a cookie version of your resort – And what a memorable talking point!

Happy Holidays

Developing a tradition during the holiday season at your resort can go a long way in building

connection between guests and between guests and your resort. Fond memories made over sugary delights can be an avenue to making your resort an essential travel plan for many. Take a look at how Wyndam implemented the gingerbread houses and much more for an unforgettable experience: <https://youtu.be/rO7oVtMo3ul>

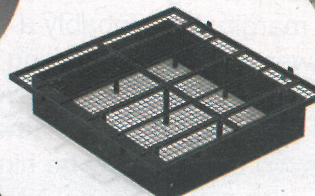
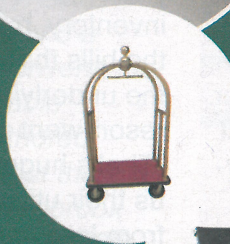
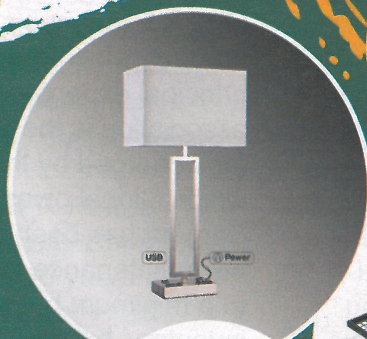
Margit Whitlock is Principal and Creative Director for Architecture and Interior Design at Architectural Concepts Inc., a San Diego, CA based Architectural and Interior Design Firm specializing in hospitality design. Ms. Whitlock is an accomplished speaker with engagements at multiple ARDA conventions, HD Boutique show as well as being frequently published in magazines such as Developments, Resort Trades, Hotel Business, Hiatus, Vacation Industry Review and Resort Management and Operations.



Annie Roberts senior vice president and chief holiday cheer officer at Club Wyndham revealed the “Countdown to Christmas” campaign for 2021. Resort Trades She explained how custom-designed suites at Club Wyndham’s timeshare resorts in New York City, Nashville, Tennessee, and Vail, Colorado that took owners/members and guests into suites with Holiday decorations resembling sets from the Hallmark Channel,

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