

Cortaca Through the Ages

SUNY Cortland

Introduction:

On Nov. 15, 2024, SUNY Cortland Dining Services hosted “Cortaca Through the Ages” at its Bistro Off Broadway dining facility, celebrating the eve of the annual Cortaca Jug football game. The Cortland-Ithaca game, a tradition since 1959, is widely known as “the biggest little game in the nation.”

The Bistro is one of two residential dining facilities on campus. We also maintain catering, concessions, four retail dining locations, four cafés and dining services at the college’s camps in the Adirondacks. Residential is the cornerstone of our meal plans, with convenient access for all on-campus students.

Essay:

The menu was designed with popular tailgating trends in mind, including various colors, textures, and flavors. It featured hamburgers, hot dogs, several types of chili, pretzels with beer cheese, barbecue chicken, and sausage with onions and peppers.

Regional foods like salt potatoes were incorporated to reflect the Cortaca game’s local flavor. A charcuterie board showcased products from local business Trinity Valley Dairy Farm while lending an upscale vibe to traditional tailgating.

Just-in-time, small-batch cooking kept food fresh and filled while reducing overproduction.

Vegetarian and vegan offerings matched signature items – we offered a vegan Buffalo dish alongside Buffalo chicken dip, allowing everyone to experience the festivities.

Dining Services employees decorated cakes for the event. Various food items were baked, grilled, fried, boiled, sauteed, or steamed.

When designing the menu, we considered food allergies and dietary preferences, with such dishes as vegan chili, buffalo cauliflower dip, gluten-free corn tortilla chips, and Beyond Burgers.

(Cortland_Cortaca_2024_Menu, Cortland_Cortaca_2024_Production, Cortland_Cortaca_2024_Food)

Introduction:

Cortaca Through the Ages showcased the history of the Cortland-Ithaca rivalry. Historical photos, hand-painted images and program reproductions helped to set the mood for a Cortaca celebration.

Essay:

Décor featured images from the game's 65-year existence, including old program covers at serving stations, each representing a different decade. (Cortland_Cortaca_2024_Programs)

We created our own program for the event – it included the day's activities, a page of Cortland players' signatures, and a menu designed as a team roster. A large station map (also shown in our printed program) at the entrance had trivia for each decade, and matching floor decals and window clings were placed in front of each station. (see the attached link to the program)

A large banner over the entrance cheered on the Cortland Red Dragons. The dining room windows featured hand-painted Cortaca imagery. A vintage Cortland football uniform was available for photo ops. Several stations featured garde manger (carved fruit decorations). (Cortland_Cortaca_2024_Decor)

Serving methods included pre-plating, such as the dessert bar; self-service (salad bar, chili tasting); served portions, such as pasta and pizza; and whole-item service (walking tacos, sausage sandwiches). (Cortland_Cortaca_2024_Service)

Introduction:

We marketed the event on our website, through social media, with printed signs, and on digital messaging boards across campus. (Cortland_Cortaca_2024_Marketing)

The Bistro is in SUNY Cortland's Student Life Center, a multi-purpose recreational building open to all students, faculty, and staff. The SLC provided an ideal space for multiple activities during the Cortaca celebration.

Essay:

The College sought to expand the Cortaca celebration in a safe and supportive manner. (Cortland_Cortaca_2024_Activities)

Bob Powell Entertainment provided music and a photo booth, using our props and a custom backdrop.

Chili tasting offered white chicken, traditional, and three-bean chili in the lobby.

We also had Finger Flick Football, where guests made paper footballs and competed to win an Auxiliary Services gift card. SUNY Cortland Prevention and Wellness and our beverage partner, Pepsi, sponsored delicious mocktails as an alcohol alternative.

Cocovibe set up a table with giveaways and samples of its coconut water products, supporting a message about sustainability.

SUNY Cortland Green Reps manned a table to discuss sustainable lifestyles and contributing to an eco-friendlier campus. University Police offered CortaCART, a simulation of the effects of high-risk drinking/drug use while navigating an obstacle course.

Health and Wellness Services sponsored Condom Cornhole, where guests could make a condom-filled bean bag to toss.

Everyone enjoyed the living Heisman Trophy hired by the College to promote Cortaca.

We gathered customer feedback with comment cards designed to look like game tickets, receiving 442 overwhelmingly positive responses. We polled students on social media and video about tailgate favorites. (Video attachment)

Introduction:

Cortaca Through the Ages was meant to give students a safe, fun space to gear up and prepare for the big game. Feedback from the campus community showed that it accomplished that goal. (Cortland_Cortaca_2024_Feedback)

Essay:


One benchmark of success for these events is increased attendance. The Bistro typically sees fewer guests on Friday evenings, averaging 1,519. Cortaca Through the Ages brought in 2,172 people, a 43-percent increase. Staff members and student workers played essential roles in this success. They painted signs and displays, carved fruit, and staged serving areas for the event. (Cortland_Cortaca_2024_Prep)

As always, sustainability was considered in the event design and implementation. Regional vendors were used whenever possible. (Cortland_Cortaca_2024_Sustainability)

Log in to nacufs.awardsplatform.com to see complete entry attachments.

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Cortland Cortac... 2.2 MiB



Attachment name
SUNY Cortland students ...

<https://youtube.com/sh...>

Cortland Cortac... 3.1 MiB



Attachment name
Printed program for Cort...

<https://www.canva.com/...>