

A trip to the City of Love: Paris, France

Florida Tech

Introduction:

Menu and Meal:
The City of Love also happens to be the birthplace of haute cuisine, Paris, France. Global Kitchen Paris at Florida Tech represented the perfect combination of Parisian delicacies, romantic decor and student engagement.

Essay:

The food was a highlight reel of classics of French gastronomy, from Salad Niçoise and escargot to quiche Lorraine, coq au vin and bouillabaisse. Dessert featured macarons, tarts and more delectable “pâtisseries Parisiennes. Before the main event, a trip to the charcuterie bar provided guests a beautiful display of cured meats, gourmet cheeses, fruits, carved vegetables and assorted nuts.

From passed hors d' oeuvres in the "café" to steaming bowls of cassoulet, Global Kitchen Paris transported guests' tastebuds through the French countryside, winding along the Seine River and straight down the Avenue des Champs-Élysées into the heart of Paris!

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Theme Development:

A trip to the City of Love, Paris, France was held on Valentine's Day 2024 as Paris and the world geared up for the XXXIII Olympiad. Months of planning and only 6 hours available to set up transformed the dining hall into the streets of Paris. Our French student group played a large role in the musical selections, menu development and decorating. SGA helped distribute "love locks" prior to the event for students to decorate and hang on the mini-Pont des Arts.

Essay:

The journey started as guest entered the lobby of Panther Dining which had been converted into the Moulin Rouge complete with "champagne" bubbly bar. Entry to the dining room took guests over the mini-Pont des Arts bridge featuring dozens of love locks personalized by students in the days prior. The guest reaction when entering the dining hall was excitement and awe!

French music filled the air. Guests were treated to a glass of bubbly and passed hors d'oeuvres while they strolled the avenues of Paris on their way to the Eiffel Tower. WAIT! The Eiffel Tower in a dining hall! Yes! A nearly 16-foot-tall tower was constructed in the months prior by the student design center and stood tall and proud.

The theme continued with dining in the private café, a stroll down the avenue with pieces of art on display from the Louvre, street carts filled with fruit and trinkets and tables covered with lace cloths and rose petals.

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Marketing and Making it Special:

Although this event series has a large following, reels were posted on Instagram, email blasts with menu were sent, digital screens around campus and posters were created. The Global Kitchen Dinner Series is also listed on the dining website and highlights each city/region traveled that year.

Essay:

The initial theme was based on highlighting a few "Cities of Love" including Rome and Honolulu, however, when the team of students from our design center told us they could build an Eiffel Tower to scale for our dining room, THE City of Love, Paris, France became the sole influence.

Valentine's Day was the perfect day for this event. We had students arriving beautifully dressed for their date night. Pete the Panther handed out roses to all. The customer feedback was incredible and lasted for weeks to follow. The event was enjoyed by students, staff, faculty, and local public patrons.

We may have had some customers that loved the event a little too much! In the early morning hours of February 15, the "Mona Lisa" was stolen in what had to have been a beautifully crafted heist. Whereabouts are still unknown to this day. However, when the Eiffel Tower was moved to its permanent home in the College of Engineering lobby the "Meowna Lisa", a crude but hilariously funny replica, appeared in its place.

Coincidence We think not! But what is Paris without an art heist!

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Additional Considerations:

An interview with engineering student Zac Schardt and Campus Dining Director Evan Olsen underscores the mission of the Global Kitchen series; to create experiences for guests that excite all the senses, using smells, textures, music and props to enhance the effect.

Essay:

Over 18 days, using more than 70 pounds of plywood, 34 cans of spray paint and 995 lights, students built the replica. Three of the days alone were used to cut sheet after sheet of plywood into tower segments using a computer-numeric-controlled

router table.

“Another three days were spent on designing and toolpath generation,” said Zac Schardt, the student leader of the project. “The remaining time went into sanding and prepping the wood, painting, lighting and assembly.”

A majority of the staff at the design center ended up assisting, Melanie Heetai, Connor Geran, Mathilda Tristan, Nick Cordell, Rongxuan Ma, Peter Zappala and Sean Sapper – most of whom later enjoyed a meal under the glow of their majestic creation.

“This event is for the students, and their interests and involvement are so important to us,” Olsen said. “We worked with them for months on the design and construction, and the finished product has become something of legend around campus. It’s now housed in the lobby of the engineering building. ”

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