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Make Room for Dessert

WE'RE A BIT FOOD OBSESSED in this issue of *Northeast Meetings + Events*. As planners, you know it's more than just sustenance; food and beverage can make or break an event, with the ability to leave a figurative good or bad taste in attendees' mouths. From a garden in the heart of Brooklyn to a black-tie dinner that explored "food as an art theme," we talked to local experts on what they're doing with their food and beverage (page 28).

Philadelphia-based Birchtree Catering has fun exploring new ideas in its regular pop-up dinner series called Supper Club. The dinner has gained a dedicated following, and all the events since 2015 have sold out. What started as an intimate dinner for 15-20 friends has grown into an event for 50 guests—"which is where we'd like to remain to hold on to the nature of the dinner. It no longer feels so intimate, but the jovial experience is like electricity in the room," says owner Allegra Derengowski. Birchtree partners with small business vendors for all event elements, and each one seems to surpass the last. "We [Derengowski and other owner Rasa Stirbys Benefico] joke that each time, we say it's our favorite one, but it always feels true."

The food itself can act like décor, just take What's the Kitch's mammoth Grazing Table for example. One attendee described the experience as: "It's like looking through a window at Anthropologie."

Dessert is one of the fastest ways to your attendees' hearts; it holds the power of nostalgia, and that rush of sugar is an instant pick-me-up. Miraya Berke and Liang Shi, founders of Dessert Goals, struck event gold with their hugely popular dessert festival. While the treats are a big part of the event's success, the duo have demonstrated that they know exactly what to do to give attendees an entire experience. And people keep returning for each iteration of the festival (of which there have been eight total—last year Dessert Goals NYC was a 6,000-person, multiday festival, this year they decided to scale it back to 3,000). Much like Supper Club, there are new vendors and offerings for each event, keeping Dessert Goals from going stale. Even if you're not big on desserts, there's a lot of mouthwatering inspiration to be found on page 18.

For even more food news, flip to page 13 for this issue's Signature Drink from Philadelphia Distilling and page 20 for beverage-specific trends.

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