

WILDHORSE
RESORT CASINO

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PLATEAU

Traditions
BUFFET

Wildfire
CABARET
Players

**Bruce Mecham is living every homemaker's dream.
He just got himself a brand new kitchen.**

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For immediate release

By the time the dust clears, the ovens begin to bake and the first diners begin to filter into the new restaurants, lounge and cabaret at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, the resort may just have created the most modern, efficient kitchens in Eastern Oregon.

With a vision that specifies the highest quality food and service in the region, Wildhorse has invested heavily in all new food preparation equipment, designed to, as Wildhorse Food and Beverage Director Bruce Mecham puts it, “maintain the flavor profile” while also allowing the resort to serve piping hot steaks to several hundred guests at a seating.

Included in the equipment are ovens that cook over 100 plated items at a time. Imagine loading 300 or 400 plates with raw steaks, cooking them to rare—on the plates—then quickly dropping the temperature in what else, a quick chiller, then rolling the rack with 100 plus plates into the reefer for a day or two. Later, barely before the meal is to be served, the racks return to the oven, where a computer-timed program cooks them to perfection.

For example, Mecham says that he’ll have a program in the oven for New York steak. “We put in the pre-plated steaks, hit the button, cook them at 120 degrees to make rare, then pull the whole unit and blast chill them in a process that is much faster than we had in the past.”

Add the sauces, the vegetables and starch and in minutes, several hundred people will begin to dine on hot meals. “And I would challenge them to ever know the difference,” says Mecham. “This new equipment is amazing. We can cook all these meals and still maintain a very high quality flavor profile. Much higher, in fact, than we could preparing them one at a time for that many people.”

Technically the new ovens, manufactured by Alto-Shaam, an international manufacturer of commercial kitchen equipment, are known as combitherms, because they combine a steamer and a convection oven. This new concept in cooking improves efficiency and quality immensely, says Mecham, when preparing meals for large groups. Alto-Shaam also manufactures Wildhorse's new quickchillers.

Of course, the new restaurants at Wildhorse, *Traditions* and *Plateau*, will not require the prepping of hundreds of meals. But with its increasing banquet business and a commitment to high quality food and service, the investment in new equipment was called for, says Mecham.

Upstairs at *Plateau*, however, the chefs at Wildhorse's new fine-dining restaurant will be cooking meat, fish and other dishes on something that might seem like a throwback to an earlier day. No computer programs control the Mt. St. Helens charbroiler. This flame cooking device, manufactured in the neighboring state of Washington by Woodstone Corporation, will burn apple wood under a grill.

Another Woodstone oven, the larger Mt. Chuckanut Stone Hearth oven, will be positioned in the middle of the buffet restaurant, *Traditions*, where guests can watch as the chefs cook everything from pizza to fresh cinammon rolls. The Mt. Chuckanut has a thick stone floor inside the oven where the baking and cooking will take place.

"Woodstone is very well known," says Mecham. "We've toured a lot of restaurants getting ready for this expansion and we saw it in many of the best places."

Also out in public view in *Traditions*, topped by a dramatic stainless steel hood, Wildhorse will have an induction stove top where other food--meats, fish, pasta and more--will be prepared as patrons watch the skilled chefs work their magic. Induction stoves have been around for years but they're much more in evidence in Europe than in the U.S., although they are gaining in popularity here, especially in commercial kitchens. Using a kind of magnetic energy, induction cooking heats the cooking container—the pan or pot—without heating the surface of the stove; in fact it remains completely cool. According to proponents, induction cooking saves energy.

Finally, Mecham is excited about his new Salvajor Scrapmaster. Scrapmaster? Not exactly exciting for restaurant patrons, he admits with a smile, but the Scrapmaster is a new technology for cleaning food preparation surfaces that shoots out a blast of water four times as powerful as the traditional hose and wand that hang over the sinks of most commercial kitchens.

“Well, I think it provides our guests with a measure of comfort,” says Mecham. “Cleanliness in our business is extremely important. And the Scrapmaster’s the best surface cleaning tool I’ve ever seen.”

Wildhorse Resort & Casino is the Pacific Northwest's highest paying casino, with a record \$9.3 million slot jackpot. The Resort includes a 24-hour casino, hotel, RV Park, 18-hole golf course and Tribal museum. It is located just minutes off I-84 at Exit 216, four miles east of Pendleton. For more information: 1-800-654-9453 or www.wildhorseresort.com . Wildhorse is owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

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