

BIZBASH

2012 Preview: 10 Most Anticipated New Washington Venues for Events and Meetings

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As we look ahead to the coming year, these are some of the most important new event and meeting venues slated to open, bringing options for everything from cocktail parties and conferences, to business dinners and corporate meetings. Here's a preview of the hotels, restaurants, bars, lounges, and other spaces the event industry will be talking about in 2012.

1. RiverView Terrace at Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, a new outdoor waterfront venue with 15,000 square feet of event space and Potomac River views, is scheduled to open in April 2012. The open, versatile space will be able to seat 700 or hold 1,200 for receptions. For further flexibility, design options include full or partial tenting with permanent anchor points. Gaylord National's banquet team is available for catering, and upgrades include portable outdoor heaters, fire pits, Tivoli twinkle lights, and even a private fireworks display over the Potomac.
2. After opening Chinatown's Italian-inspired *Graffiato* in 2011, *Top Chef All-Stars* contestant Mike Isabella is heading to Georgetown for his next restaurant, *Bandolero*, which is set to open in 2012. With a focus on Mexican small plates, the venue will seat roughly 170, and while there will not be a private dining room, the second floor will be available for buyouts for parties of 30.
3. Another *Top Chef* contestant, Bryan Voltaggio, is adding more restaurants to join his acclaimed restaurant, *Volt*, in Frederick. In spring of 2012, Bryan plans to open the East Street Diner in Frederick, specializing in American classics like meatloaf, lasagna, crispy fried chicken and breakfast staples. The venue, located on East Street in a former Nissan car dealership, will seat 96, including counter seating for 30 and an outdoor dining area. Another Voltaggio project, a steakhouse called *Range*, is proposed in Chevy Chase for a late fall 2012 opening.
4. Popular Indian restaurant *Rasika* will be joined by a sister restaurant, *Rasika West End*, in March 2012. The West End *Rasika* will be located in a new condo project, 22 West, and will seat 140 in the 5,900-square-foot restaurant, which includes three private dining rooms. Executive chef Vikram Sunderam will oversee both menus at *Rasika* and *Rasika West End*.
5. Jeff Black of Black Restaurant Group is set to open a new venue in fall 2012 at the new mixed-use Mosaic District development in Merrifield, Virginia. Instead of bringing in national restaurant chains, the Mosaic District's developers recruited local favorites, like Taylor Gourmet, Cava Mezze, Matchbox, and Black's new restaurant. The concept for the venue has yet to be determined, but Black aims to create the largest raw bar on the East Coast, with 25 or 30 varieties of oysters.
6. Upscale hotel development company Capella Hotels and Resorts will open a 48-room boutique hotel in Georgetown overlooking the C&O Canal. Housed in an existing five-story building being redeveloped by Capella, IGC Properties, and Castleton Holdings, LLC, the hotel's amenities include a restaurant, lounge, bar, spa, and rooftop pool. Meeting space includes a boardroom that will accommodate up to 16 people and a private dining space for up to 10.

7. The Ford's Theatre Center for Education and Leadership will open in February 2012, housed in a building across the street from [Ford's Theatre](#). The center will host pre- and post-visit workshops, after-school programs, and teacher professional development in the bilevel space. The venue will also host permanent exhibitions about the aftermath of Lincoln's death and his continuing legacy, as well as a technology-rich distance-learning laboratory.

8. In spring 2012, the [Madison Hotel](#) will unveil the results of an extensive renovation, featuring all new guest rooms, a lobby bar and new restaurant dubbed PostScript, which joins the Madison's already completed Federalist restaurant. The hotel now offers nearly 12,000 square feet of renovated meeting space, including the elegant Dolley Madison ballroom and Montpelier rooms, as well as six other divisible meeting rooms. Amenities for meeting space include new digital reader boards, 52-inch flat panel 3-D televisions, Wi-Fi, LED lighting, and ergonomic tables and chairs.

9. EatWell DC's fifth restaurant, the Pig, will open on 14th Street in April 2012. The concept of the 70-seat, 3,000-square-foot casual neighborhood restaurant is pork, from nose to tail. All meat and produce prepared by the Pig's chef, Garret Fleming, will be sourced within the region, including from EatWell's own natural farm in La Plata, Maryland.

10. At the end of 2011, former Teatro Goldoni chef Enzo Fargione opened Elisir Restaurant, a new fine dining Italian option in Penn Quarter. The restaurant offers a private dining room for up to 25 and a private setting in the front of the kitchen's "Observation Deck" for up to 60 guests. Elisir's menu options include a seven- or 10-course tasting menu, and the restaurant also will schedule three-hour cooking classes with chef Fargione for \$129 per guest, including lunch, wine, recipe books, and Elisir aprons.

—Adele Chapin