

facility design project of the month

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Executive Orders

Washington, D.C., Convention Center

Occupying 18,500-square-foot, Executive Orders measures 412 feet long, but is only 45 feet at its widest point. At far right is the Bello Pronto concept.

Steam griddles, infrared broilers and a gas cooktop with refrigerated drawers below are among the state-of-the-art equipment that is on display in a seven-concept dining pavilion set in a long, narrow space managed by Centerplate in the new Washington, D.C., Convention Center.

**By Donna Boss,
Contributing Editor**

Six months ago, the doors to one of the country's largest convention centers were opened in the nation's capital. Located two blocks from the downtown site of the former conference facility, the new Washington Convention Center features 2.3 million-square-foot of space, including more than 700,000-square-foot of exhibit areas in five halls, 125,000-square-foot of meeting rooms, 65 loading docks and a \$4 million art collection. Adhering to the District of Columbia's building height restrictions, the center's tallest point is 110 feet above street level (the lobby's ceiling reaches up 90 feet), while the lowest point is located 36 below ground.

On any given day, as many as 20,000 conventioners may attend events in the center. One of attendees' foodservice options is Executive Orders, a dining pavilion that is located 16 feet below street level and managed by Centerplate of Spartanburg, S.C., and National Business Services Enterprises of

Washington, D.C. Although other foodservice options are available in the center, this is the only one featuring upscale quick-casual concepts.

Occupying 18,500-square-foot, the food hall measures 412 feet long, but is only 45 feet at its widest point. Lining both sides of the restaurant are a total of seven themed concepts, each with an open production area and adjacent seating spaces that are decorated with each concept's contemporary color scheme and motif. Along the north side of the restaurant are Subculture, a specialty coffee station and deli with menus written by Terrell Danley, executive chef at Sam & Harry's Group; Foggy Bottom Grill, a concept offering American fare, including burgers, prime rib, garlic fries, draft root beer and draft beer; Thoi, an Asian section offering menus developed by Thoi Nguyen, owner of Nam Viet and Pho 79; Bello Pronto, an Italian concept featuring dishes by Cesare Lanfrancia, managing partner and executive chef of the district's Tosca Ristorante and Bello Pronto Management; and Seafood, featuring products from Phillips (a casual seafood chain).

On the opposite side of the pavilion, separated from the north side by porcelain tile flooring with polished granite accents, are Dona Maria, a south-of-the-border concept offering Latin American cuisine; a Wolfgang Puck Express, featuring gourmet-style pizza, Chinois chicken salad, sandwiches and soups; and two designated beverage counters with soft drink and ice dispensers, and airpot brewers and racks for hot beverages.

"The space was designed so customers would feel as though they are walking from neighborhood to neighborhood as they pass the concepts," stated Jon Muscalo, vice president, Facilities, Design and Capital Purchasing for Centerplate. The food court's color scheme at one end is

to 40 ♦



Photos by
Jon Muscalo
and Donna Boss

At Subculture, specialty coffee drinks are offered at one side of the station, while deli sandwiches are featured on the other. A yellow, gold and red color scheme creates a bright ambiance at the west end of this food hall.

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In *Dona Maria*, which features Latin American-style menu items, sandwiches, quesadillas, Latin salads and house specialties such as lime-grilled chicken burritos are made on equipment including a 60-inch sandwich and salad prep table, quesadilla griddle and four-well hot food table.

At *Foggy Bottom Grill* (below), equipment includes a charbroiler, fryer battery and dump station, a 72-inch steam griddle and a 60-inch sandwich and salad prep table.

own dry storage area and walk-in cooler. At least once a day, fresh food ingredients, bread and packaged and paper products are brought to these storage areas in concept-designated, locked security carts from the convention center's main commissaries, one of which is located within the building but six city blocks away from Executive Orders. Also in this back-of-the-house is a centralized utility and warewashing area equipped with a garbage disposal and utensil storage.

If all these challenges weren't sufficient, due to the narrow width and low ceiling of the back-of-the-house service corridor, a custom-designed remote chiller system had to be installed for the facility's seven walk-in coolers and eight ice machines in order to prevent heat buildup.

The most difficult feat performed in the front of the house was unquestionably figuring out how to position and install a 7,000-pound pizza

◆ from 39 bright with assertive colors while the other displays a cooler palette. The multi-concept food hall's interior decoration was the conception of Kay Pangraze, principal, PK3 Design, Greenville, S.C. Muscalo proudly pointed out that he and Pangraze selected most of the décor items during a shopping spree at the Atlanta Merchandise Mart.

"In addition to placing seven concepts in the narrow space allotted for the restaurant," explained Muscalo, "our engineers, Bredson Associates, had to distribute utilities through the low ceiling, as well as install proper lighting while maintaining an overhead height that wouldn't take away from a comfortable dining experience for guests. In addition, we had to run the exhaust ducts down through the floor into the loading dock area of the facility — which is on the ground floor, 36 feet below street level — and then up to the roof, 110 feet above."

Finding sufficient storage space was also problematic. The only area available near the food concepts was a narrow service corridor on the south side of the pavilion. Each concept was allocated its



oven required for the Wolfgang Puck Express operation (Centerplate is a Puck franchisee). "We had to bring the oven in early during the construction process," noted Muscalo. "Fifteen months before the restaurant opened, we had to take out windows and bring in a special forklift to hoist the oven up to the food hall level, 20 feet above the exhibit hall floor."

Today, each themed concept is self-contained and designed with E&S capable of supporting the types of cuisine served. "The menus are simple, yet use high-quality ingredients that are prepared fresh daily," said Muscalo. "Therefore, the equipment package had to be ample but not extravagant, and assure very efficient production as we may put through 2,500 people in one lunch period."

"Our objective was to bridge the gap between à la minute service and traditional quick-service operations," commented the project's foodservice consultant and space planner, John DePaola, principal, Foodservice Resources, Fredericksburg, Va. "We needed specific equipment to make that happen. We wanted to provide the quality of made-to-order food with a system designed to serve large numbers of customers."

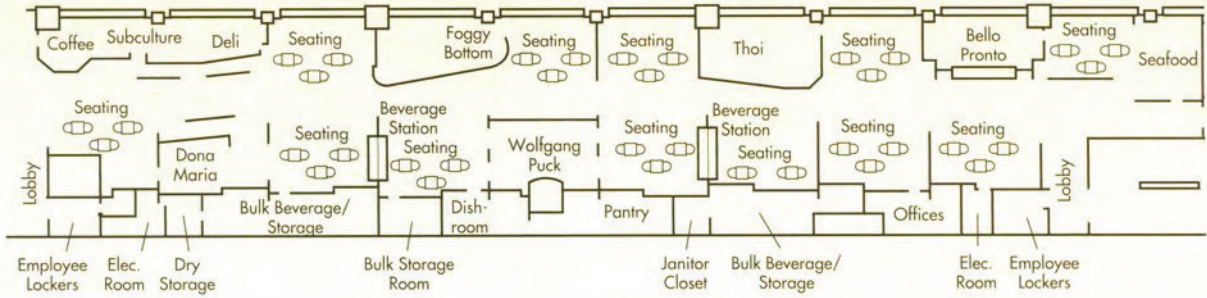
Among the pieces of equipment installed at each station (where appropriate) are custom-designed sneeze guards (which DePaola called "minimalist"), hand and utility sinks, shelving, refrigerated display cases, undercounter and upright refrigerators (all of which can be transformed into freezers), fire suppression systems, pendant-style warming lights and POS terminals, which were installed at each station in order to expedite the speed of transactions and minimize the time customers must

to 42 ◆

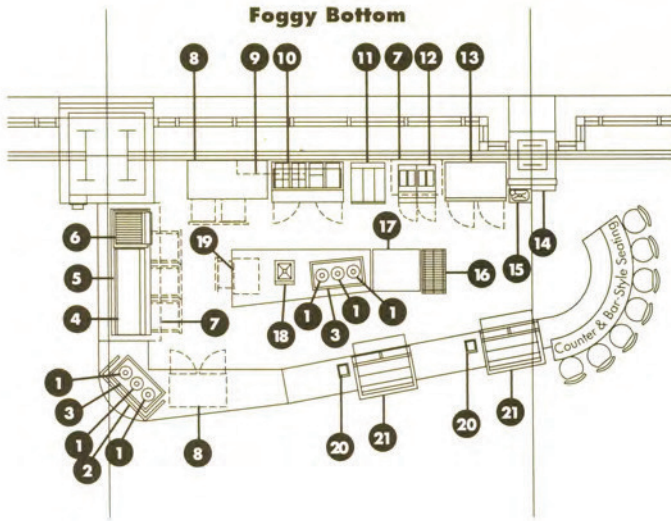


A wok range, a griddle, a fryer, a steamer, induction warmers, a humidified hot food cabinet and two noodle stations were installed at *Thai*, an Asian food concept.

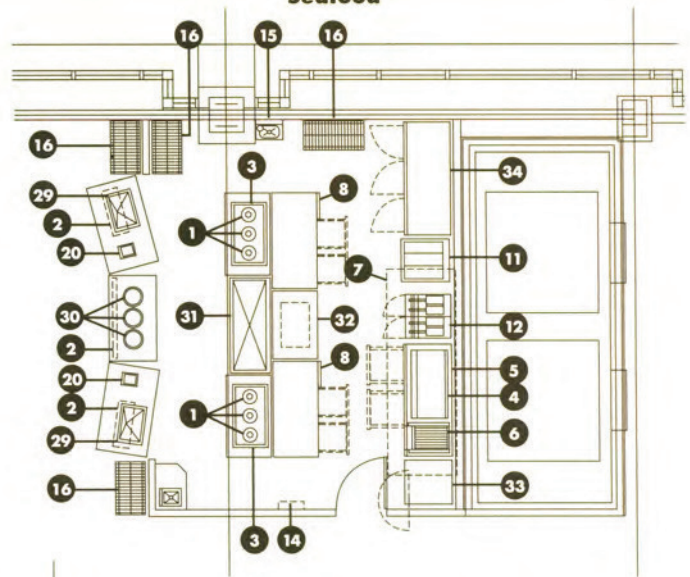
Executive Orders in the Washington, D.C., Convention Center



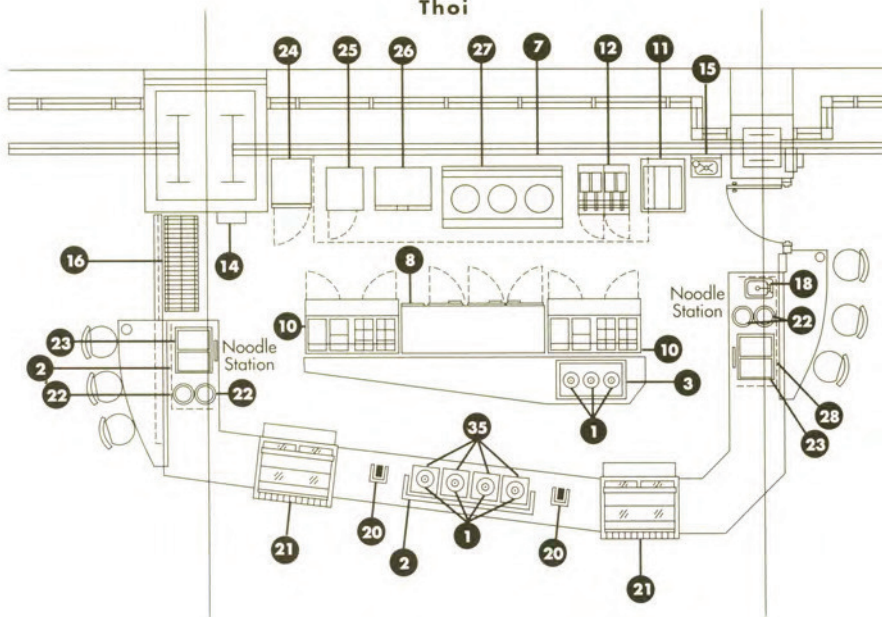
Foggy Bottom



Seafood



Thoi



Key Equipment List

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Warming lights | 19. 2-drawer food warmer |
| 2. Sneeze guard | 20. POS terminal |
| 3. Heated granite shelf | 21. Refrigerated display case |
| 4. Steam griddle | 22. Soup cooker/warmer |
| 5. Refrigerated equipment stand | 23. Food warmer, drop-in |
| 6. Infrared charbroiler | 24. 1-section refrigerator |
| 7. Exhaust ventilator | 25. Steamer |
| 8. Undercounter refrigerator | 26. Steam griddle |
| 9. Wall shelf | 27. Wok range |
| 10. Sandwich & salad prep table | 28. Noodle station w/sink |
| 11. Dump station | 29. Drop-in ice pan |
| 12. Fryer battery | 30. Soup warmer, kettle-style |
| 13. 2-section refrigerator | 31. Ice display counter |
| 14. Fire suppression system | 32. Worktable |
| 15. Hand sink | 33. Humidified hot food cabinet |
| 16. Shelving | 34. 3-section freezer |
| 17. Butcher-block counter | 35. Induction warmers |
| 18. Drop-in utility sink | |



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facility design project of the month

Executive Orders

◆ *from 40* spend waiting in line. At each counter's front side are refrigerated display cases and ice bins for bottled beverages and granite hot plates with pendant heat lamps overhead.

At Subculture, one side consists of a specialty coffee station, while the other is a deli where sandwiches are made-to-order and packaged for refrigerated display. Salads are also offered here. In addition to the equipment mentioned above, this station has a frozen beverage dispenser, a double airpot brewer, an airpot rack, two 60-inch sandwich and salad prep tables that hold 12-inch by 20-inch hotel pans, two sheet pan racks, a conveyor toaster, a convection oven, a slicer and a humidified hot food cabinet. At the counter are refrigerated display cases and induction cookers/warmers used for merchandising soup.

At Foggy Bottom Grill, a 72-inch steam griddle was installed along with a charbroiler, fryer battery and dump station, and a 60-inch sandwich and salad prep table that is used to produce this concept's American fare. "We selected the steam griddle because of the speed with which it can cook menu items, as well as its consistency," explained Muscalo. Also at this station is a granite thermal shelf and two-drawer food warmers, in addition to an exhaust hood designed to be functional, as well as attractive.

The adjacent Thoi station features appetizers such as California rolls and crispy spring rolls, salads, soups and main entrées, including chicken shrimp pad thai, kung pao and caramel pork with rice. This station was equipped with induction warmers, a humidified hot food cabinet, two noodle stations, a wok range, a griddle, a fryer and a steamer. Granite bases are used to radiate heat from below while pendant heat lamps keep food warm from above.

The next station, Bello Pronto, features Italian-style soups, salads, pasta dishes such as ravioli and penne with various Italian



At Bello Pronto, equipment includes a convection oven, a gas six-burner cooktop with refrigerated drawers beneath, two pasta cookers, three panini grills, a humidified hot food cabinet, a heated granite shelf and a drop-in ice pan.



Positioned at the east end of the food hall, the Seafood concept's equipment includes a steam griddle, an infrared charbroiler, a fryer battery and dump station, a humidified hot food cabinet, a granite thermal shelf, a kettle-type soup warmer and a drop-in ice pan.

meats and cheeses, as well as panini sandwiches and desserts. Its equipment includes a convection oven, a gas six-burner cooktop with refrigerated drawers beneath, two pasta cookers, three panini grills, a humidified hot food cabinet, a heated granite shelf and a drop-in ice pan. The same granite bases

and lights installed at Thoi are used here.

At the far end of the lineup is Seafood, a concept featuring products from Phillips' line of seafood products. Offered here are platters of crab cakes, coconut mahi mahi or crispy shrimp, all served with fries. Also available are house-made salads, soups and desserts. The menu items are cooked on a steam griddle, an infrared charbroiler, a fryer battery and dump station, and held in a humidified hot food cabinet, a granite thermal shelf, a kettle-type soup warmer, a drop-in ice pan, and sloped iced display counter dedicated to raw seafood entrées.

On the opposite side of the pavilion, across from Subculture, is Dona Maria, which features Latin American-style menu items. Sandwiches, quesadillas, Latin salads and house specialties such as lime-grilled chicken burritos are made on a 60-inch sandwich and salad prep table, a quesadilla griddle and four-well hot food table, as well as equipment found at nearly all stations.

At Wolfgang Puck Express, in addition to the gas-fired brick oven used to bake gourmet-style pizzas, the concept is equipped with a pizza landing table and another prep table where sandwiches and salads are assembled, two refrigerated display cases, two maple top pizza holding tables and two custom maple-top soup counters.

Though the Washington Convention Center and Executive Orders are still in their infancy, they are receiving a full-scale endurance test as large groups come to meet and dine in the enormous space. So far, customer feedback has been extremely positive, according to Lyn Mayer, acting general manager for operations for Centerplate.

"We believe this to be a unique food concept in a convention facility," concluded Muscalo. "It is very large, offers limited menus at seven diverse concepts, yet provides high-quality restaurant-style food." What better place to aim high and raise customers' expectations for convention center foodservice than in one of the world's grand seats of power, this nation's capital.

— F&S

Design Capsule

Executive Orders opened for the Washington, D.C., Auto Show in December 2003. Foodservices in the Washington, D.C., Convention Center are managed by Centerplate and National Business Services Enterprises. Executive Orders features seven themed concepts: Subculture, Dona Maria, Foggy Bottom Grill, Thoi, Bello Pronto, Wolfgang Puck Express and Seafood. There are two support pantry and beverage counters. The back of the house includes dry and refrigerated storage for each concept. One area for utensil and dishwashing is shared by all concepts. Hours are typically 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. The facility has 400+ seats. The convention center building is 2.3 million-square-foot, with 1 million-square-foot of exhibition space, which includes five exhibit halls. Executive Orders is 18,500-square-foot, but only 45 feet wide at its widest point. This operation is located on the concourse level 1 floor below street level. It employs 55 FTEs.

Owner: Washington Convention Center
Foodservice Providers: Centerplate of Spartanburg, S.C., and National Business Services Enterprises of Washington, D.C.
Project Supervisor: Jon Muscalo, vice president, Facilities, Design and Capital Purchasing for Centerplate, Spartanburg, S.C.
Building Architect: Mariani Associates, Washington, D.C., and TVS, Atlanta
Architect for Executive Orders: Berger Devine Yaeger Inc., Kansas City, Mo.
Interior Design: Kay Pangraze, principal,

PK3 Design, Greenville, S.C.; Engineer: Bredson & Associates, Blue Springs, Mo.

Acting General Manager for Operations at the Convention Center: Lyn Mayer, Centerplate
Foodservice Consultant and Space Planner: John DePaola, principal, Foodservice Resources, Fredericksburg, Va.

Foodservice Dealer: Centerplate Facilities
Kitchen Equipment Contractor: Centerplate Facilities

Contractor: Carlson Constructions, Washington, D.C.