

Richmond, VA April 7th, 2009-River City Hospitality, LLC announced today that Golf Event Magazine recently published an interview with River City Hospitality President and CEO Stephen Wilson recently. The article may be found at <http://www.golfeventmagazine.com/ME2/dirmod.asp?sid=&nm=&type=news&mod=News&mid=9A02E3B96F2A415ABC72CB5F516B4C10&tier=3&nid=31B298A13A834D96A8D10F0EB251466A>. Below is a transcript...

Vendor Q&A: River City Hospitality

Offers turnkey programs to premier golf events, including the Masters.
(4/7/2009)

Stephen Wilson is president and CEO of River City Hospitality, LLC, Richmond, Va. In the mid-1990s he became involved in the industry when he worked in the New York City office of Marcus Evans, Inc., marketing high-end corporate packages at premier golf events to Fortune 1000 firms.

What services do you offer golf event planners/corporate meeting planners?

River City Hospitality offers corporate meeting planners turnkey customer programs at premier golf events like the Masters Golf Tournament.

At the Masters our corporate clients receive guaranteed Masters "badges" to the tournament. They will also receive accommodations in the Jones Creek Golf Community, an upscale neighborhood just a short drive from the Augusta National Course. They will receive an in-house stocked bar and cigars, which is restocked upon request during our clients stay. They will receive daily maid service. Each of our clients will also be assigned a driver who will be on call 18 hours a day to shuttle groups to/from their home and the course and to take our clients out on the town each evening. Our drivers will offer our clients nightlife suggestions, and are responsible for taking care of special requests during the event. Last, our clients will receive catered dinners each evening.

At other golf events our clients will receive tickets to the tournament, access to on-site hospitality tents including food and beverage service and valet parking.

We also provide all of our clients with comprehensive event planning services including assistance with travel arrangements, help with restaurant reservations, guidance with nightlife suggestions and distribution of comprehensive event information.

Number of years in business?

River City Hospitality has been in business for two years. I have been in the golf event industry for 13 years.

Are you available nationally?

Yes. Since events like the Masters draw spectators worldwide we do have a national scope. For example, we have clients attending the 2009 Masters from both coasts, and everywhere in between. We even have an Australian firm booked with us for the 2010 Masters event.

How did you get involved with the Masters?

I got involved almost 10 years ago at the Masters event. It took a lot of phone calls to vendors, especially homeowners and badge holders. As far as the event logistics, we handle most everything, including transportation, in-house.

In your opinion how has corporate client entertainment changed over the years? Particularly now with the current economic situation?

Corporate entertainment has changed dramatically over the last 10-plus years. As more providers have entered the marketplace, successful firms have gotten more competitive, both on price and in terms of services provided. Those that have not adapted to the changing market conditions have suffered. Some have gone under. The current economic situation has only magnified the importance of being competitive.

The winner in all of this has been the client. They are now receiving more for less.

In a down economy why do you think firms still find it valuable to entertain clients at events such as the Masters?

In a down economy it is more important than ever to retain valued customers. When our clients are entertaining their customers at events like the Masters, they are getting 12-14 hours of face time with their customers each day. And they are doing so at an event considered a once in a lifetime experience. It's just a great way for a company to prove to its customers how important they are to them.

Many companies have canceled meetings and travel due to the bailout backlash. How can corporate planners still entertain clients without damaging the company's brand and reputation?

We've noticed that large firms are still participating at major golf events but are downsizing their visibility to avoid criticism. For example, some firms have elected not to display their corporate logo on hospitality tents. Firms are still entertaining but are toning things down a notch.

If a planner feels the Masters is perhaps a bit out of reach for them, what are some other options when it comes to corporate client entertainment and golf?

I have always been a fan of the regional PGA Tour events. They are more cost effective and do not have the large galleries that a major has. Therefore they are very conducive to corporate entertainment.

Any specials or value adds you're currently offering planners?

We are running a promotion now for our entire line of 2010 golf events, offering discounts up to 20 percent. We're about to add another promotion, where a client will receive a free advertisement on our corporate web site when they book a Masters package with us.

Trends you're seeing in the industry?

We are definitely seeing a progression towards customization of packages. At certain events we are seeing a trend to no-frills packages that do not include food and drink in a hospitality tent. At other events the trend might be to add a Pro-Am or a round of golf at a top course during the clients' customer event.

Anything else you would like to add?

Having Tiger Woods back in action is great for business!

Contact: info@rivercityhosp.com, swilson@rivercityhosp.com, 276.807.4307, www.rivercityhosp.com