

Catering Sales Manger Carol Mann – A Perfect Fit

The recipe for Carol Mann's success as Catering Manager at the San Francisco Zoo may include mixing her love of cooking and food with her creative ability and attention to detail. Then, adding her experience in customer service with an accent of art history knowledge results in excellence.

Prior to SSA, Carol owned and operated a bar-be-que restaurant that she sold after seven years. When she started looking for a new job, she specifically applied for jobs that said "assistant" as she was tired of being the boss. When she was hired as assistant catering manager at SSA, she had a great boss who taught her about catering upscale events rather than the casual bar-be-que parties she had catered from her restaurant. When her boss left, Carol was promoted. She's been with SSA for four years and seems quite happy now being back in charge.

Carol's career path was one she didn't choose. Initially she embarked on a career in the airline industry. When she graduated from a local high school in New Haven, CT, her goal was to "fly the friendly skies." She got on a one-way plane going from Connecticut to California, leaving behind her parents and siblings, to attend flight attendant school. Unfortunately, it was at a time when airlines were laying off, not hiring flight attendants. Carol decided to shift gears and pursue a career in hotel sales.

After several years in this profession, she decided to follow her

dream and open a restaurant. While she enjoyed the experience, she likes what she does now even though she claims she's working harder than as a proprietor.

When Carol is not working, she enjoys cooking, reading about cooking and watching cooking shows. Her husband, Dave, is also in the industry. He owns a pizza restaurant. However, he occasionally helps Carol at the zoo. His mechanical skills have proven to be helpful when electric carts break down.

The couple has been married for 22 years; they met when they were both working at an area restaurant. Carol shared that the smartest thing she ever did was marry her husband. He's also her most valued "possession." She said it may be corny, but it's true. He's a good guy to have around; and he's a jack of all trades.

In her free time, Carol likes to watch movies and do crafts, such as scrapbooking, but her favorite activity is cooking up new recipes. She and Dave

also like to take week-end trips to nearby Sonoma with its award winning wineries, stately redwoods and magnificent coastlines.

In the past, Carol logged quite a few miles on the bike saddle, even completing a metric century (62 miles) as well as the Tour of Death ride featuring lung-busting climbs in the mountains of northern California, but those days are long behind her now.

With her dedication to her career, Carol hasn't taken many vacations in the past four years. But she's making up for it this summer. Carol and Dave are planning a trip to France, with stops in Paris and Provence. While visiting the southeast of France, they'll be staying with relatives and enjoying the vineyards, history, art and farmers markets of this Mediterranean region.

Carol's love of food combined with her expertise does make her a perfect fit for her current job.

Five Fast Facts about Carol Mann

1. Favorite color is black.

2. Favorite food is "meat," she claims she could never be a vegetarian.

3. Subscribes and reads 10 cooking magazines. Her "bible" is Bon Appetit magazine.

4. Three credits short of a degree in art history.

5. Captivated by the Food Network channel.



Carol said the smartest thing she ever did was to marry her husband, Dave.