

SOMEWHERE *Spectacular*

Vancouver Event Industry Holiday Party

by Laura Bickle

In 2016, the Vancouver chapters of PCMA, MPI and ILEA decided to band together to produce a blockbuster annual association holiday party that would support scholarships and education programs. "Traditionally, the associations produced their own separate little cocktail parties," says Alex Bickers, president of Reveal Events Group and then-president of ILEA Vancouver. The result was a spectacular *It's a Wonderful Life*-themed celebration on the Rocky Mountaineer. The event won a Canadian Event Industry Award and a tradition was born. "It has built momentum and is seen as a showcase of BC event talent and suppliers. It's event people building an event for event people."

This year's *The Wizard of Oz*-themed event was hosted at the JW Marriott Parq Vancouver and named Somewhere Over. "We wanted to get away from conventional wintry themes and give the story a modern interpretation," says creative director Robert Porter, owner of Elizabeth Stanley Event Design.



Witch's Castle photo-op

PAY NO ATTENTION
TO THE MAN
BEHIND THE
CURTAIN

This sign enticed guests to look behind the curtain to be rewarded with a silent disco and dessert station.



Emerald City DJ Booth



Auntie Em's Farmhouse

FAST *Facts*

DATE

Tuesday,
December 18, 2018

NUMBER OF ATTENDEES

450

FUNDS RAISED FOR EDUCATION INITIATIVES

\$15,000
(100% of profits)

LOAD-IN STARTED

8 am, December 17

LOAD-OUT ENDED

4 pm, December 19

NUMBER OF SPONSORS/SUPPLIERS

39

VALUE OF SPONSORSHIPS

\$500,000



Watch a video of the event. Scan the QR code on page 32 or visit ignitemag.ca

The floorplan was created as a journey through Oz, starting at Auntie Em's kitchen in the pre-function room where passed canapes and cocktails were served. The activations in the main room included the Yellow Brick Road LED dancefloor and Emerald City DJ Booth, The Witch's Castle photo op, Poppy Field lounge, Farmhouse VIP lounges, Muchkinland oxygen bar, a silent auction and silent disco.

Given the interactive nature of the floorplan, the menu aimed to keep guests moving and exploring. Along with passed hors d'oeuvres, food stations served lamb, tacos, smoked salmon, chicken sliders and artisanal cheese.

The event has become known for having a big "reveal" moment. This year, the team challenged itself to create an experience that was "as close as possible to a real tornado," says Porter. Here's how it went down: Dorothy ran frantically through the crowd, desperately searching for Toto with a tornado looming. When the tornado "struck", power failed and emergency warning lights engaged. The room swirled with strobe lightning and CO₂ cannons emulated the dangerous wind. An audio cue of thunder, rain and wind enveloped the crowd in 3D sound, accompanied by sound clips such as "Follow the Yellow Brick Road" and "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain." When the house "crashed," two 54-foot runs of kabuki drape dropped on either side of the room, revealing Oz in a full wash of colour, projection mapping, LED wall and indoor pyrotechnics.

Learn more about the event and see a list of suppliers at vancouvereventindustry.com

Alex Bickers (producer), Lion, Jennifer Winter (production manager), Dorothy, Robert Porter (creative director), Scarecrow and Tinman.

Glinda's dress held takeaway candy and Christmas ornaments.



Muchkinland oxygen bar



Photos: Vision Event Photography, with the exception of centre far right (page 32) and Munchkinland photo (page 37), Brian Demme Photography