

THE BENSON

PORTLAND

A COAST HOTEL®

THE BENSON HOTEL IS TAKING ITS BELOVED HOLIDAY TRADITIONS VIRTUAL FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 48 YEARS

Chef David Diffendorfer and the historic Portland hotel will preserve the long-standing annual tradition of the Gingerbread Masterpiece through an online video, community contest and holiday-themed class.



(Captions L to R: Past Gingerbread Masterpieces from 2016, 2019 and 2017, respectively. Photos courtesy of The Benson Hotel)

PORTLAND, Ore. (November 30, 2020) – The Benson Hotel is maintaining a 48-year holiday tradition by taking it virtual. In the interest of protecting the health and safety of guests and staff, the historic hotel will bring the festivities to people’s homes, including a new community-based contest for a grand Gingerbread Masterpiece, and a wreath-making class.

“This year has presented many challenges, but our team is constantly evolving and adapting in these ever-changing times, said George Schweitzer, The Benson Hotel’s Managing Director. “While The Benson is revered for its annual Gingerbread Masterpiece unveiling, we are unable to hold the celebration in our lobby this year due to current COVID safety regulations. Nevertheless, we are happy to bring an on-line version of our holiday programming to people’s homes. Celebrate the holidays and join us virtually in honoring the beloved traditions here at The Benson Hotel.”

The festivities begin in early December on The Benson Hotel’s Instagram [@thebensonhotel](#) and Facebook [@TheBensonHotel](#) with a compilation video of Chef Diffendorfer’s 27 previous iconic Gingerbread Masterpieces. Every year, this one-of-a-kind edible sculpture brings joy to the community through a grand debut event, and is on display in The Benson Hotel’s lobby throughout the month of December for all to see.

Due to current government gathering restrictions, The Benson Hotel is open to registered hotel guests only, making this year unique in how we celebrate traditions like the Gingerbread Masterpiece

unveiling This event will feature Chef Diffendorfer virtually highlighting his past creations, while discussing his experiences participating in this annual tradition and his motivation for creating these phenomenal sculptures: to inspire viewers to craft their own gingerbread houses during the holiday season.

“I have been creating the Gingerbread Masterpiece for nearly three decades, and am happy I can still keep the tradition alive during this extraordinary year,” said Chef Diffendorfer. “I hope everyone enjoys this year’s special video and that it inspires people to build a masterpiece of their own.”

In the absence of our traditional celebration, The Benson Hotel will be hosting a virtual gingerbread house contest for a chance to win grand prizes. Participants of all ages, both amateurs and professionals, are invited to create their own sculptures at home out of entirely edible materials.

These gingerbread houses will be judged in three categories: Fan Favorite, Most Talented and Most Creative. The Fan Favorite will be determined via social media. Most Talented, as judged by Chef Diffendorfer, will be awarded to the gingerbread house with the greatest level of detail in construction and decoration. The Most Creative winner will have a fun theme and creative choice of ingredients, as judged by The Benson’s executive team.

All entries must be submitted by December 18, and Chef Diffendorfer will announce the winners via video on December 22 on The Benson’s social media channels. Entrants should submit the name, a description and photos of their gingerbread creation along with their own name, phone number and email to Julie Parker, director of sales and marketing, at jparker@bensonhotel.com or via Facebook for a chance to win the following prizes:

- **Fan Favorite:** *Uniquely Portland Package:* Deluxe overnight accommodations at The Benson Hotel, a Voodoo dozen at Voodoo Doughnuts, one of Portland’s most quintessential hot spots and a gift card to Powell’s Books, one of Portland’s top attractions.
- **Most Talented:** *Suite Escape:* Two nights’ accommodations in a Presidential Suite and a \$300 dining credit at El Gaucho, Northwest’s iconic steakhouse.
- **Most Creative:** *Wine & Dine Package:* Overnight accommodations in a Penthouse Suite, a bottle of sparkling wine and a \$200 dining credit at El Gaucho.

Continuing the festive fun, Kim Foren, local professional florist and owner of Geranium Lake Flowers, will launch a virtual wreath-making video on The Benson Hotel’s Facebook and Twitter [@TheBensonHotel](https://www.facebook.com/TheBensonHotel). Join Kim in crafting a beautiful wreath out of real plants and winter-themed décor.

While these virtual events are free, guests visiting The Benson Hotel are encouraged to make a donation to the American Red Cross to help those affected by disasters and this year’s western wildfires. Guests can donate \$5 of their reservation to help make a difference this holiday season.

For more information about this year’s Gingerbread Masterpiece, community contest, virtual events or The Benson Hotel, please visit www.bensonhotel.com.

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ABOUT THE BENSON HOTEL

Established in 1913, the historic Benson Hotel combines European elegance and charm with modern luxuries. Located in the heart of downtown Portland near sightseeing, tax-free shopping, nightlife, performing arts and museums, The Benson Hotel features 287 guestrooms and suites with high-definition LCD televisions, high-speed wireless, alarm clocks with iPod/MP3 stations, organic bamboo robes and slippers, Sealy® Tempur-Pedic sleep-system beds and more. The property is also home to The Palm Court restaurant and bar, as well as more than 18,000 square feet of versatile meeting and event space. For more information, visit www.bensonhotel.com. If you would like to stay in touch, please like [The Benson Hotel](#) on Facebook or follow [@TheBensonHotel](#) on Twitter and Instagram.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

The American Red Cross is a humanitarian organization that provides emergency assistance, disaster relief and disaster preparedness education in the United States. This nonprofit organization prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

MEDIA CONTACT

Elitsa Yaneva

Public Relations, GreenRubino for Coast Hotels USA and The Benson Hotel

P: 425.495.2819

E: ElitsaY@greenrubino.com