

CASE STUDY: THE 2008 GOURMET INSTITUTE

Creating Consumer Engagement for an Exclusive, High-End Culinary Experience

The 2008 Gourmet Institute was a weekend long culinary experience, which included seminars and tastings with winemakers, chefs, and editors as well as dinners and other exclusive culinary events, including a citywide dine around and chef book signings, presented by *Gourmet* Magazine held in New York City.

Bullfrog & Baum was brought on as the publication's Agency of Record to secure media coverage to ultimately drive ticket sales.

THE CHALLENGE:

When Bullfrog & Baum was secured to promote The Institute, the event was largely known as sedate and stuffy. After six years, the format of the Institute continued to offer classroom-style seminars and tastings, which were perceived as "tired." In addition, competitive events such as the New York City Wine & Food Festival had come on the scene, which offered fun and experiential programming. Timing also overshadowed The Institute as the Festival took place one week prior to Gourmet's activities. During this time, it was the worst recession this country had ever seen in decades and the Institute's ticket price per person was approximately \$1,400 – an exorbitant amount of money at the time.

On the media front, The Institute was run by a national magazine thereby limiting coverage in a host of competitor publications and the highly-sought out interview with Editor Ruth Reichl was available on a limited basis.

THE GOALS:

Bullfrog & Baum's initiatives were to raise awareness within the tri-state area and citywide through a targeted media relations strategy. In addition, we were to distinguish the event from others by achieving awareness via the stellar roster of participating chefs.

THE PROGRAM:

Bullfrog & Baum worked closely with such chefs including Charlie Palmer, Todd English, Marcus Samuelsson, Grant Achatz, John Besh and others to create talking points for use in all media interactions. We created weekly media alerts, highlighting a different guest chef and their activities during The Institute, focusing on both their respective cities and the tri-state feeder markets in order to boost ticket sales week-to-week. Bullfrog & Baum also created an e-kit of relevant press materials, which was novel at the time. This invigorated the media coverage of individual activities while creating a buzz for the weekend as a whole. Lastly, we arranged one-on-one interviews for each chef during the book signings and during breaks from scheduled programming.

THE RESULTS:

Through our efforts, Bullfrog & Baum created a swell of coverage that broke through the cloudy economic atmosphere and cluttered New York City media landscape. Coverage appeared in such outlets as Sirius' "Martha Stewart Radio," "CBS Early Show", BBC "The World" Radio, "TODAY" show, Delish.com, *The Hartford Courant*, Huffington Post, *The Chicago Sun-Times*, Grub Street and "Good Day New York" and other relevant outlets. At the completion of our campaign, Bullfrog & Baum garnered over **112 million impressions**.

