



VENUE NEWS 01.06.10 1:20 PM

2010 Preview: Washington's 10 Most Anticipated New and Updated Venues

Following a year of steady openings, 2010 has a slew of bigger and better venues on the horizon, suitable for every type of event. Here are 10 to watch for, listed in the order of their scheduled debuts.

1. For its first venue outside New York, the Fireman Hospitality Group will open [Bond 45](#) at National Harbor later this month. In addition to a sweeping Potomac River view, the 215-seat Italian steak and seafood house gets a 1930s patina from its tin ceiling, mosaic tile floors, and smoked mirrors. There are four semiprivate glass-enclosed rooms and a 60-seat patio.
2. In stages beginning this month, the 44-year-old [Hilton Washington](#) will unveil the results of a \$140 million top-to-bottom renovation this year. January brings the opening of the Heights Executive Meeting Center, the Concourse Level, 1,070 revamped guest rooms, and the new District Line Restaurant & Bar. Come June, the 30,000-square-foot multipurpose Columbia Hall opens, along with the Heights Courtyard and Gardens and the Terrace Meeting Suites.
3. The [Walter E. Washington Convention Center](#) is set to expand in February with 40,000 square feet of flexible meeting space in several parts of the venue, including the East and West Registration areas near the Grand Lobby and the upper levels overlooking 7th and 9th Streets. The project includes new custom carpeting, upgraded lighting, electrical and sound systems, and a state-of-the-art partition wall system.
4. Also in February, after a four-year wait, noted local chef Roberto Donna will open the 6,100-square-foot [Galileo III](#) in the former Butterfield 9 space. The 80-seat eatery includes a flexible 45-seat private dining room, a fireplace, an open kitchen, and a color scheme of copper and sienna. In addition to the chef's seasonal menus of traditional Italian fare with a lighter modern touch, 100 dishes, such as suckling pig, will be available for preorder via the restaurant's Web site.
5. In April, Paris-based George V Entertainment brings an outpost of its [Buddha Bar](#) to Mount Vernon Square. The 9,500-square-foot space is comprised of a 170-seat restaurant and a 50-seat lounge, decorated with crimson velvet, low lighting, Asian tattoo murals, and signature gold Buddha statue at its center. The menu is Asian with French influences. A 60-seat sunken patio is also in the plans.
6. Opening in May, Penn Quarter adds another Latin venue with the more than 10,000-square-foot [Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar](#), which promises 1950s Havana decor and live music and dancers. Staff will serve innovative Latin cuisine in a 200-seat dining room decorated with murals of Cuban life. Plans call for a 46-seat bar and lounge with an extensive rum selection, as well as a 66-seat sidewalk café.
7. Budgeted at \$9 million, the super-sized [Carmine's](#) opens in Penn Quarter in spring. The 670-seat family-style Italian eatery from New York-based Alicart Restaurant Group will have a 40-seat bar, 50-seat cocktail lounge, and eight private rooms. Sliding wall units will accommodate groups of various sizes in the 20,000-square-foot venue.
8. When June rolls around, George Mason University in Fairfax plans to open the 148-room [Mason Inn & Conference Center Hotel](#) on its campus. The property will have a 175-seat restaurant and private dining room for 20. The design team is working with a color palette of olive, orange, red, and gold in the 20,000 square feet of meeting and event space, which will accommodate as many as 450 guests.

9. The owners of Local 16 have an August opening in mind for the tentatively titled [Table 14](#)—an 80-seat farm-to-table restaurant and bar coming to the 14th Street corridor. Walls of exposed brick and architectural details of the former 1900's department store are preserved in the 5,000-square-foot trilevel space, which includes room for 30 on the roof deck.

10. Sporting a dramatic cantilevered roof, and already a landmark on the Potomac River waterfront in Southwest, the [Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater](#) opens this fall with 200,000 square feet of revitalized and new space. Joining the updated 683-seat Fichandler Stage and refitted 514-seat Kreeger Theater will be the oval-shaped 200-seat Kogod Cradle as well as a large lobby, classrooms, and rehearsal halls.

—Walter Nicholls



The expanded, 200,000-square-foot Arena Stage Mead Center has three theaters, a common lobby, classrooms, and rehearsal halls.

Rendering: Courtesy of Arena Stage



At National Harbor, the 215-seat Italian steak and seafood house Bond 45 has four semiprivate dining rooms.

Rendering: Courtesy of Bond 45



Washington Convention Center's 40,000-square-foot expansion includes custom carpet, upgraded lighting, and a state-of-the-art partition wall system.

Rendering: Courtesy of Washington Convention Center



Cuba Libre in Penn Quarter has 1950s-style Cuban decor, entertainment, and an extensive rum menu.

Rendering: Courtesy of Cuba Libre



George Mason University's Mason Inn brings 20,000 square feet of meeting and event space to Fairfax.

Rendering: Courtesy George Mason University



Roberto Donna's 80-seat Galileo III has a flexible 45-seat private dining room.

Rendering: Courtesy of Roberto Donna