

WILO BENET
Company Profile - 2005



WILO BENET STELLA

Founding Chairman, CEO and President:

Pikayo, Museum Restaurant Group and Museum Catering Services
209 Ponce de Leon Ave.
Popular Center, Suite 1832
San Juan, PR 00918

President and Partner:

Payá
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Guaynabo, PR

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URL: www.wilobenet.com

Tax ID No.: 660583149

Year company was founded:

1990 – Pikayo

2000 – Museum Restaurant Group (MRG)
Museum Catering Services (MCS)

2003 - Payá



ABOUT WILO BENET



Perseverance and high standards rule in Wilo Benet's world. After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America, he worked in various renowned restaurants in New York, including Le Bernardin, The Maurice Restaurant and The Water Club. He came back to his native Puerto Rico to become Chef de Cuisine of the Governors Mansion. Two years later in 1990, Wilo together with his wife Lorraine, opened **Pikayo** in Old San Juan. The restaurant was a totally new concept in Puerto Rico in terms of food, decoration and service. During the following 10 years, **Pikayo** was relocated, first to Condado and then to its present location, the Art Museum of Puerto Rico in Santurce.

In 1996, while still running **Pikayo**, Wilo became General Manager and Vice President of Copamarina Beach Resort in Guánica. In this property he managed 120 rooms, 2 restaurants, a Spa and the diving operation. He and his team repositioned Copamarina by making a dining destination in the West Coast. During his tenure, he was able to raise the average room rate and increase the food and beverage revenues and profitability, making this resort a very profitable one.

After 10 years of successfully running **Pikayo**, he wanted to look for new ventures. Wilo created **Museum Restaurant Group**, a company that offers its clientele exceptional dining experiences, exclusive catering services and top-notch management and consulting services blended to perfection with personalized service. In response to the demand of his clientele, Wilo also created **Museum Catering Services**, serving banquets for larger groups in a variety of venues, paying special attention to detail.

In 2004, despite world economic set backs such as 9/11 and in the middle of the war in Iraq, in a bold move Wilo opened his second restaurant, **Payá**, located in Guaynabo, seating 280 people. This new venture had various challenges: the location was not a high traffic area - he would have to create the destination. Also, he wanted to reinvent the island's traditional combinations, and serve local fare reflecting his innovative cuisine at moderate prices.

Despite his very hectic schedule, Wilo has always found time to set aside and devote it to those who are just commencing their careers acting as a mentor, coach and counselor. Those who are perseverant enough to catch his demanding eye are often lucky to stay and cook with him in the kitchen.

Last year, being the tireless artisan that he is, Wilo looked for yet another endeavor. Having studied photography during his early years, he combined his food expertise with digital pictures also taken by him and combining it with the use of canvas, acrylic paint and fluorescent lighting, thus creating and coining his **Gastronomic Impressionism**. In December 2004, he successfully presented his work at Biaggi Faure's collective exhibition.



His passion for food and creativity are the only things that remain constant in Wilo Benet's fast-paced world.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

- Black Culinarian Alliance – Jefferson Evans Award 2005
- Sales & Marketing Executives of Puerto Rico – Guanín Award 2005
- James Beard Foundation – Guest Chef 2004
- Johnson & Wales – Distinguished Visiting Chef 2004
- El Nuevo Día's Certamen del Buen Comer
 - Tenedor de Bronce - 5 times
 - Tenedor de Plata - 4 times
 - Tenedor de Oro - 5 times, the last one in December 2004
- Chef Hat Award – on 4 occasions and Chef Hat Award, Hall of Fame 2002
- SER de PR – Paladeo 2002
- PR House of Representative – Recognition 2002
- PR Senate Resolution 2002
- National Restaurant Association – Service Award 2001
- Chef of the Future – Honored Guest 2000 & 2005
- PR Culinary Team – Gold Medal 1995
- PR Culinary Team – Silver Medal 1994
- Caribbean Culinary Awards of Excellence – Best Professional Standards 1995
- PR Hotel & Tourism Association – Best Puerto Rican Entrée, Typical Food Competition 1992



BUSINESS STRATEGY

While working at the Governor's Mansion, Wilo came up with the idea of bringing together the flavors of the original settlers that Puerto Rico and Louisiana have in common: the French, the Spanish and the African. That was how **Pikayo** was born. At that moment, Puerto Ricans did not eat spicy food and had not been exposed to what Wilo had in mind.



The original **Pikayo** at Old San Juan, circa 1990.

Wilo's concept, which was never seen in Puerto Rico before, included a totally modern décor with a different ambiance: an open kitchen, no tablecloths on the tables, an all-American wine list and unusual food combinations. But he needed the economic back-up to construct and materialize his vision. In what was then a gamble, his first investor became his father, William Benet, Sr. who put up his house as collateral. Two years later, Carlos Matos, his partner to this day, bought 20% of **Pikayo's** shares.

Against the will of his partners and having resisted cooking with local recipes until then, he decided to bridge the gap between traditional Puerto Rican cooking and incorporate it to his formal French-training background. At that moment, **Pikayo** was relocated to the Condado area, not knowing that what he had resisted, would become what **Pikayo** is today.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Wilo Benet:

Founding Chairman, CEO and President of Pikayo, Museum Restaurant Group and Museum Catering Services

President and Partner of Payá

Associate Degree in Culinary Arts, Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York

Carlos Matos:

Partner, Consultant and Treasurer MRG & MCS – 1992 until present

BBA Industrial Engineering, University of Wisconsin

Food distributor since 1976

He joined Wilo Benet at **Pikayo** in 1992. Carlos offered Wilo financial and business management support and subsequently helped develop the wine program at Pikayo.

Raul Negrón, CHA:

Chief Operating Officer MRG - 2000 until present

MRG and MCS Secretary

Payá Assistant Treasurer

Raul has over 30 years of experience in the Hotel and Restaurant Business, occupying managerial positions for renowned hotel and restaurant chains such as: Sheraton, Holiday Inn, Days Inn, Gulf & Western Hotels, independent brands, as well as large public hotel corporations including Servico Hotels & Resorts. He met Wilo in 1993 and started collaborating with him since 1996 to present.

Laraliza Rivera:

Chief Accountant MRG – 2000 until present

Prior to working with Wilo, Laraliza had seven years of experience in the banking business where she occupied different positions in the First Essex Bank and the Federal Reserve Bank starting as a teller and moving up to head cashier supervisor, lock clerk, saving accounts including checking IRA wire transfer ACH, ATM.

Nivia Margarita Crespo:

Catering Director MRG & MCS – 2000 until present

Margarita is in charge of creating theme parties, coordinate services for local and international markets in small and large volumes, on-and-off-premises. She also manages all Wilo Benet's special presentations as well as those held in **Pikayo** and **Payá** Restaurant. Since 1995, she worked for several well-known hotel chains including the Sands, San Juan Grand, Intercontinental, Condado Plaza & El San Juan Hotel, all located in Puerto Rico.

Kenneth Medina:

Corporate Chef MRG and General Manager Payá – 2003 until present

Kenneth began working as a Line Cook in Copamarina Resort in 1992 until 1995, when he was promoted to Kitchen Manager. In 1997 he became Executive Chef of Copamarina. After having worked at the Ponce Hilton and Casino for a year, he was then summoned by Wilo to work as Kitchen Manager and later as Chef de Cuisine in 2001. In 2003 he was called upon to work in the pre-opening stages of **Payá** until he later became its General Manager.





Carlos Nieves:

General Manager Pikayo – 2001 to present

He is in charge of overseeing the day-to-day operation as well as maintaining and exceeding a high level of service, food & ambiance of **Pikayo**. He has worked for several renowned restaurants and hotel chains such as Intercontinental Hotel in Isla Verde, El San Juan Hotel, El Conquistador, The Taj Majal in Atlantic City where he supervised 300 employees in 15 food & beverage outlets and Hyatt Dorado Beach, among others. He started working in **Pikayo** in 1999 as a waiter until his perseverance took him to the position he holds today.

Oscar Alexis Rivera:

Chef de Cuisine Pikayo – 2003 until present

Alexis started working at **Pikayo** as a dishwasher in 1994 and worked his way up to his present position.

Martin Tejada:

Maitre d' Pikayo – 1998 until present

He started working for the restaurant industry in 1980 as a dishwasher, then a busboy and later as a waiter in The Water Club Restaurant in New York, where he met Wilo, while Wilo was Chef Poissonier. He began working in **Pikayo** as a waiter and worked his way up to the position he presently holds.

José A. Torres:

Sommelier Pikayo – 2002 until present

“Joito”, as he is known amongst friends and colleagues, began working in **Pikayo** in 1995 as a busboy. He worked his way up until 1997, where he was promoted to Captain. Today, after long hours of research and education, he is respected among wine lovers while proudly carrying the title of Sommelier as well as directing the Wine Program.

Gustavo Esteras:

Bartender Pikayo – 1994 to present

Gustavo has been in the food & beverage industry since 1982. Since 1997 until 2001, he was the President of the Bartender’s Association. He now holds the title of Vice President of the Association. He has represented PR and has participated in various competitions including The Taste of the Caribbean 1996 and has won various awards, nationally & internationally, since 1990-1997.

María Elena Pérez

Public Relations Consultant MRG - 2005

Maria Elena has been in the hospitality industry for the past 18 years. She headed the Public Relations Department in properties such as Condado Plaza & Casino, Palmas del Mar in Humacao and Caribe Hilton & Casino, the latter for eleven years. She has also done consulting work for San Juan Marriott and Villa Montana Beach Resort in Isabela. She has a Master’s Degree in Public Relations from the University of Sacred Heart in Santurce.

WILO CONTRIBUTES

- American Cancer Society
- Unicef
- Chefs of the Future
- Puerto Rico Hotel & Tourism Scholarship Foundation
- Asociación de la Distrofia Muscular
- Bill's Kitchen, Inc
- Black Culinary Alliance
- Centros Sor Isolina Ferre
- CODERI
- Dalai Lama
- El Hogar del Niño
- Fundación Biblioteca Rafael Hernandez Colón
- Fundación Hogar Niño Jesús
- Fundación Jose Jaime Pierluisi
- Fundación Risa
- Fundación Ronald Mc Donalds
- Fundación Sebastian Delíz
- Fundación Todos A Leer
- Future Chef's Convention
- Jewish Community Center of Puerto Rico
- La Buena Vida Festival
- Miss Universe
- National Foundation for the Arts
- San Jorge Children's Hospital
- SER de Puerto Rico
- Universidad de Puerto Rico



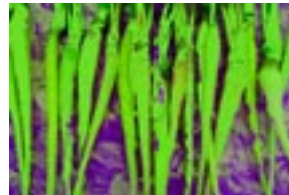
BUSINESS MODEL

For the past 15 years, **Pikayo** has kept its place on top of the list of best restaurants in Puerto Rico as well as internationally, continuously staying current with global trends. The importance that Wilo places on discipline, consistency and maintaining high standards are evident in his day-to-day work.

As yet another proof of his sustained creativity, Wilo created "**Acuarelas**"; a live cooking demonstration which is part of his **Museum Catering Services**' outfit. But he took this demonstration a step further – he raised the bar and instead of just cooking for a group, he cooked and added his gastronomic impressionism and his newly-found hobby, playing drums with a 7-piece rock n' roll band, and incorporated them all in one show. In 2004 he performed for the first time for 150 newspaper food editors from all around the United States at the Bacardi premises.

COMPETITIVE POINTS

- Administrative platform
- Compound years of experience
- Global standards and trends
- Constant pursuit of remaining current



PRODUCTS

Museum Restaurant Group

- Pikayo
- Payá
- Management Services
- Consulting Services

Museum Catering Services

- From an intimate gathering to high volume functions
- Fund-raising products
- Live entertainment performances such as Acuarelas

Gastronomic Impressionism

WILO'S VISION

Within the next five years, Wilo's company will open two more restaurant locations, another restaurant facility on the mainland, write his second book, host a TV show at a national level and double the revenues by 2010.

In ten years, his company will have opened 5 more restaurant locations between Puerto Rico and the US, designed his own line of products to be sold in convenience stores, designed a line of products for the table based on **Gastronomic Impressionism**, and have written several publications about Puerto Rico's food as well as his experiences in the culinary arena.



Gastronomic Impressionism
Top left: Lapin Vert
Above: Níspero
Bottom Left: Petit Breakfast

STRENGTHENED CULTURE

The acceptance received by Wilo's staff in terms of initiatives is key in creating a culture that has staff-retaining percentages much higher than average in the industry and serving as an example for newcomers.

There is approximately an 85% retention of staff at all levels.



REFERENCES



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