



[EVENT REPORT](#) **12.07.07 12:49 PM** - All About Speed Fast cars, good food, and hot entertainment were the name of the game during Ford Championship Weekend. To start the Nascar fun of Ford Championship Weekend, ESPN held a special employees-only bash on November 15 to celebrate the final race of the Busch Series and a season of hard work and solid racing coverage. Revelers gambled the night away aboard the [Grand Floridian](#) with a bevy of good eats and delicious libations.

The party kicked off with cocktails, passed hors d'oeuvres, and a buffet-style dinner, catered by the yacht, before the four-story vessel embarked on a nighttime cruise around Miami Harbor. Upon embarking, each guest was given a voucher for \$5,000 worth of chips to spend in the onboard casino. Throughout the night, guests meandered between lounges on the first and third decks, the casino on the second, and the open-air top deck, where a barbecue grill served hot dogs, hamburgers, and more.

The second deck was fully equipped with blackjack, roulette, poker, and craps tables, as well as slot machines, courtesy of [Royal Casino Events](#). While no one gambled with real money, a sense of good-natured competition was palpable. Prizes were given to the top winners of the night, as well as raffle prizes such as tickets for the Richard Petty Driving Experience (which gives fans the chance to ride in a Nascar racecar) and a 52-inch Samsung plasma television.

Sports Illustrated Invades SoBe



ME Productions transformed South Beach's the Fifth into Club SI to jump-start Ford Championship Weekend.

Over on South Beach, members of the racing community, celebrities, and athletes partied Miami-style with *Sports Illustrated* at [The Fifth](#) before heading off to the track for the weekend to witness the finale of the Nextel Cup Series.

[ME Productions](#) transformed the venue into the specially branded "Club SI." They began outside by adding Club SI signage and gobo lighting to the side of the building, along with four Ford production vehicles, both on the red carpet and suspended on ramps above it. Inside, guests walked through a fog screen and into the venue's intimate bilevel space. The Fifth's high-energy bartenders served drinks below [So Cool Events'](#) suspended ice sculpture of the club name while caterwaiters served assorted hors d'oeuvres, courtesy of the club.



Club SI and Ford logos were all projected onto the walls of the Fifth.

"We used a lot of red, orange, and yellow hues to convey a fiery inferno, yet chic theme", said Jennifer Freedman of ME Productions.



The Miami Heat Dancers were among the many notable faces at Club SI.

Miami's [DJ Irie](#) and guest DJ Funkmaster Flex entertained the group, remixing dance favorites as the Miami Heat Dancers, in *Sports Illustrated* attire, performed atop illuminated acrylic columns throughout the space. Guests were also treated to a special performance by the Wallflowers, which served as the climax of the evening.

It's Miller Time

Up the beach from Club SI, ME Productions once again transformed one of SoBe's best venues with bevy of branding. [Mansion](#) played host to more than 400 people to celebrate "Miami Lites," an event campaign developed by ME Productions after being recruited by [GMR Marketing](#), Miller Lite's alliance marketing agency.



New Century Dance Company dancers in spandex racing-themed costumes and Miller bikinis performed for guests.

Inside the nightclub, ME hung 12 giant air-filled spheres from the ceiling, onto which they projected custom-made graphics that changed colors throughout the evening. The team also constructed a 30-foot projection wall around the DJ booth that featured Miller graphics and racing clips.

Throughout the night, guests sipped their Miller Lites while lounging on white couches (on which branded Miller Lite pillows had been placed) and off-white, branded plexiglass high-top tables illuminated with LEDs. Performers from [New Century Dance Company](#) danced atop Mansion's platforms. [Eggwhites Catering](#) served sliced prime rib, boneless pork loin, sliced marinated chicken, and more.

ME Productions strategically placed flat-screen monitors throughout Mansion, which continuously played multimedia clips from both Nascar and Miller Lite commercials.



Further up the beach, at [Trump International Sonesta Beach Resort](#) in Sunny Isles, the Miami Lites Weekend continued poolside. Guests entered the pool area through a checkered-flag-inspired entryway and were greeted by a racing model perched on a branded Miller cube waving flags.



Catering stations provided by the Trump International Sonesta Resort were outfitted in black-and-white checkered stretch spandex and featured hubcap centerpieces and orange traffic cones.

Various branded seating areas, catering stations with tropical fare, and portable bars were placed around the perimeter of the lagoon-shaped pool-onto which a Miller logo was also with gobos. The 400 guests chilled out to reggae band the Monarchs.

—Erick Cipau, Brittany Peitsmeyer