

From the lighting to the centerpieces, auction items, and carpeted entrance, red was the color of the evening.



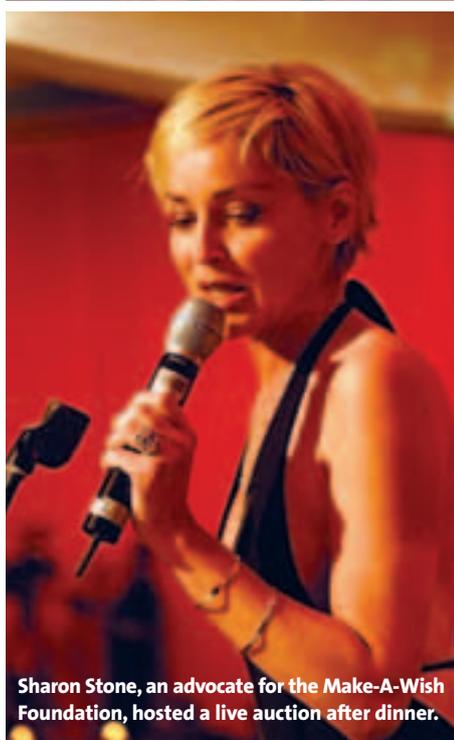
EVENT REPORTS



BayFront Floral Decorators created centerpieces by placing large silver bowls with red roses and rose petals that overflowed onto the table and accenting them with tea lights.



A red Ferrari was among the items bid on during the live auction.



Sharon Stone, an advocate for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, hosted a live auction after dinner.



Following the live auction, guests were treated to a performance by singer Natalie Cole.

Hollywood Takeover

The Make-A-Wish Foundation of Southern Florida hosted its 13th annual ball, raising more than \$1.5 million and shattering its previous fund-raising record.

TRITON PRODUCTIONS CREATED A Hollywood-themed evening of glitz and glam for the 13th annual Make-A-Wish Ball at the InterContinental Miami on November 10. As guests passed through the red-carpeted entrance, lined with tall vases of red flowers, models dressed in British beekeeper-inspired costumes greeted them.

Upon entering the cocktail reception area, eventgoers were welcomed with the evening's signature red drink, the My Fair Lady, named for the famous stage musical and movie. Guests mingled and bid on silent-auction items including a motorcycle, art, and exotic vacation packages. A digital photo booth was also available for guests to take black-and-white snapshots of themselves, which were then projected onto a large circular screen.

Just before dinner, an opera singer performed while perched high above the doorway to the ballroom, with her long custom-made red skirt descending over it. After the performance, her expansive skirt was raised to reveal the entrance and allow guests to enter the ballroom. Inside, Triton emphasized clean lines, with rectangular and square tables, charger plates, and more. In addition, custom fabric lamps were suspended from the ceiling.

Following dinner, actress Sharon Stone hosted a live auction of items including a Ferrari, her personal Rolls-Royce, and watches from Jacob the Jeweler.

The evening continued with a performance by singer Natalie Cole and a confetti shower of red and silver tissue rose petals. A chic lounge was arranged for the after-party, where guests enjoyed espressos and cappuccinos, and danced to the music of DJ Irie. — Ashley Guistolisi

An opera singer performed during the cocktail hour perched above the ballroom entrance, which was hidden beneath her expansive gown.



Make-A-Wish Ball

Catering, Venue InterContinental Hotel Miami
Event Design/Decor, Event Management, Lighting, Production Triton Productions
Flowers BayFront Floral Decorators
Sound Southern Audio Visual

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF TRITON PRODUCTIONS

Art Basel Invades Miami

With a selection of art from 200 galleries across 30 countries, the city showcased many well-known international artists, as well as an impressive array of up-and-coming talent throughout the four-day fair.

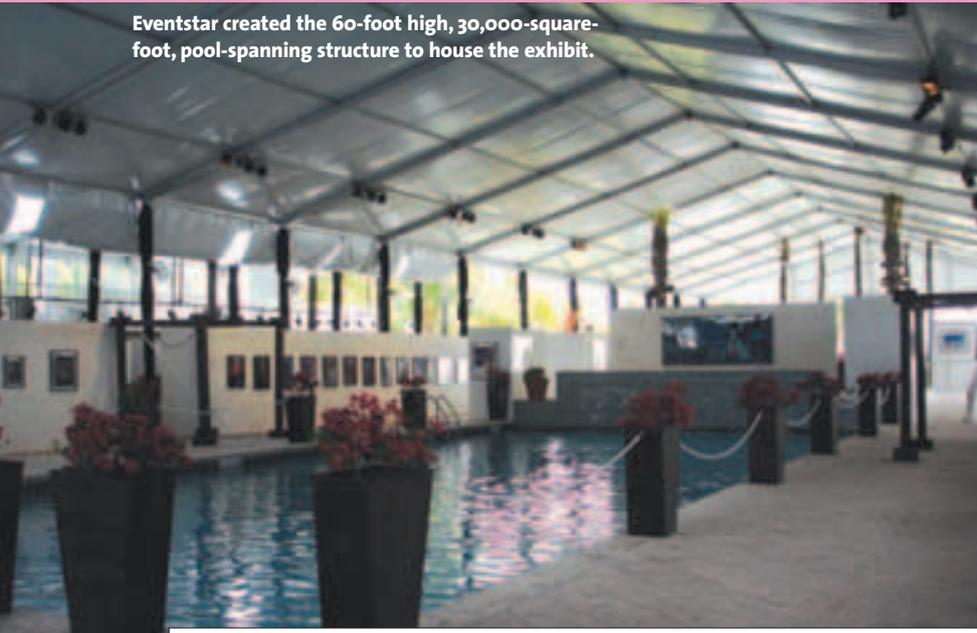


The “Design Miami” exhibition took place at the Moore Building in the design district during Art Basel.

MORE DESIGN OPTIONS AT THE MOORE

Known for its functional space, versatility, and in-house art installations, the Moore Building welcomed Art Basel to its space with the “Design Miami” and “French Kissin’ in the USA” exhibits, on display December 7 through 9. “Design Miami” highlighted limited-edition contemporary design, as well as rare historic pieces, with additional performance spaces set up where art enthusiasts could watch artists create the very designs that were on display. Each floor of the building was divided into separate rooms for each designer’s exhibit, with the top floor dedicated to Tokujin Yoshioka, named designer of the year by Ambra Medda, director of the exhibit.

In a separate area of the Moore space was the “French Kissin’ in the USA” exhibit, which displayed works from 18 emerging French artists. With a funky name and great design, the exhibit highlighted artists making waves in France’s art scene who have yet to receive international recognition. —Deborah Barton

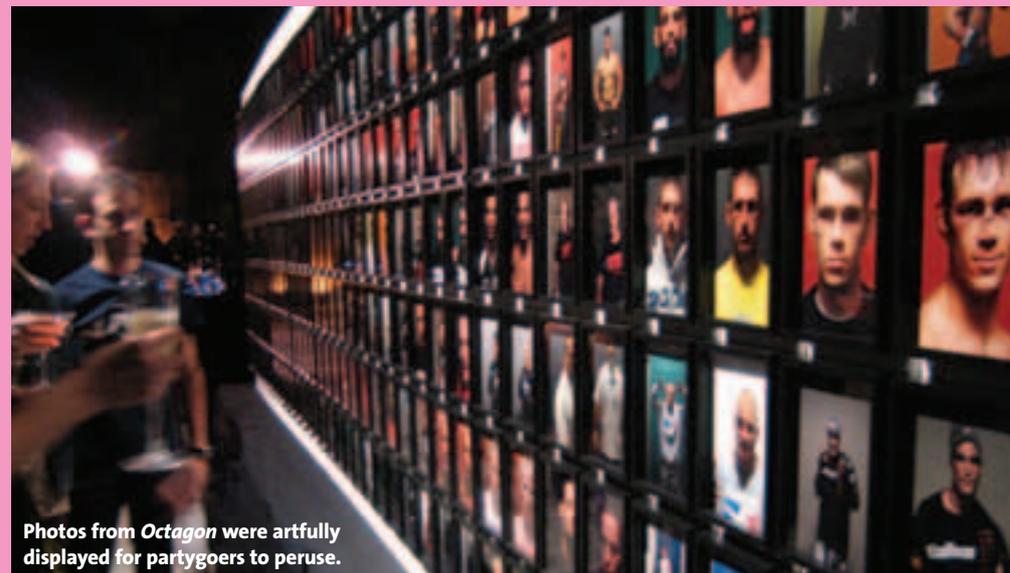


Eventstar created the 60-foot high, 30,000-square-foot, pool-spanning structure to house the exhibit.

“IN FASHION” IN PHOTOGRAPHS

The world’s leading fashion photographers finally got their chance to showcase their best works at the “In Fashion ’07” exhibition at the DoubleTree Surfcomber Hotel during Art Basel. More than 200 works of art from France, Japan, the United States, and other countries were on display December 2 through 9. With shots handpicked by curator Marion de Beaupré, a fashion-photography authority in Europe for more than 25 years, the exhibit featured 20 known and emerging photographers said to represent the future of fashion photography.

A groundbreaking exhibit in more than one way, François Trabelsi, founder of the Art Photo Expo who conceived the idea for the exhibit, turned to Citizen Events to make the exhibit come to life with a one-of-a-kind display. Roderick Kukurudz, president of Citizen Events, collaborated with Alain Perez of Eventstar to create a 60-foot-high, 30,000-square-foot, pool-spanning structure—a feat neither had seen done before. Constructed by hand—with workers in the pool and on ladders connecting the pieces—over two days, the structure covered the hotel’s entire pool and deck areas, complete with suspended lighting, seating areas—with furniture provided by Bubble Miami—and even private event space on the beach. —Channing Muller



Photos from *Octagon* were artfully displayed for partygoers to peruse.

JUST A BOOK LAUNCH? NO, A FULL EXTRAVAGANZA

Artsy types, big-spending collectors, media elite, and hipster glitterati filed into the pool area behind the Setai Hotel on December 6 for the glamorous book launch of *Octagon*. The book, a limited-edition collection of photographs from Ultimate Fighting Championship events, was the star of the night, as prints from it were used in decor elements.

In the garden, Triton Productions created an atmosphere with an edge through creative lighting and design installation. A wall of photographs greeted partygoers at the entrance, and massive screens flanking the hotels’ three-pool garden displayed rotating images of UFC fighters. The massive coffee-table book was also on display for guests to see—but not to touch, as models were on hand to turn pages. —Sara Liss

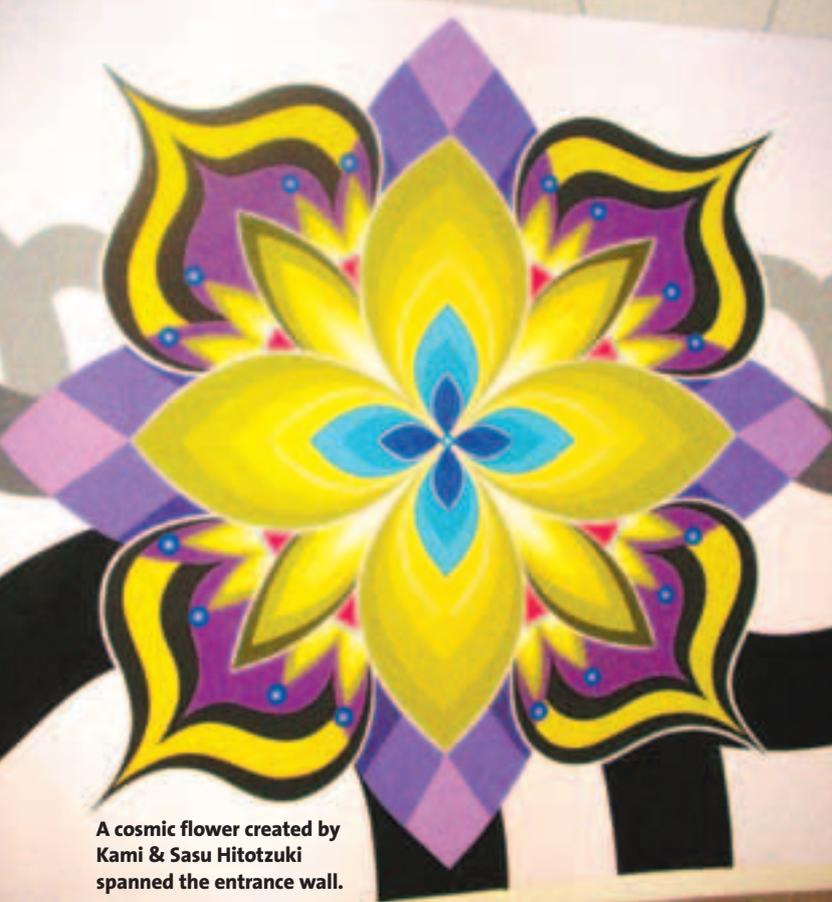
STREET ART BREAKS SOCIOECONOMIC BARRIERS AT “F.A.M.E. COLLECTIVE”

Maximum Impact Associates broke socioeconomic barriers with the presentation of the “F.A.M.E. Collective”—it stands for “Fashion, Art, Music, Entertainment”—at the four-story property owned by Todd Glaser on Miami Beach December 4 through 7. The four-day exhibit featured more than 25 of the most prolific graffiti, pop, and contemporary artists from around the world. The street-art exhibition highlighted works by Futura, Ron English, Sam Flores, Stash, and Dave White, among others. Additionally, JB Classics Lab, a West coast-based sneaker company created a limited edition sneaker for the event incorporating the comfort of an athletic shoe with the aesthetic details of a luxury shoe. Other collaborations included furniture by Francois Frossard and Miami Ink’s Chris Garver and Chris Nunez.

—Brittany Peitsmeyer



Guests admire Dave White’s artwork at “F.A.M.E. Collective.”



A cosmic flower created by Kami & Sasu Hitotzuki spanned the entrance wall.

PUCCI CELEBRATES 60 YEARS

To honor the late Emilio Pucci, a designer known for his colorful designs, and his 60 years of work, his daughter Laudomia Pucci, renowned visual artist Gerard Cholot, and designer Matthew Williamson hosted an uber-exclusive brunch on December 6 during Art Basel. Cholot took over the private ballroom of Norma and Luis Quintero's waterfront estate to re-create his May 2007 transformation of Palazzo Pucci's courtyard in Italy. Channeling the joy of childhood and the importance of movement in Pucci designs, he hung the designer's garments from oversized balloons draped in signature Pucci fabric.

Outside in the courtyard, guests enjoyed brunch, courtesy of Thierry's Catering, under a sheer white draped tent designed by Karla Conceptual Event Experiences. Inside the tent, Karla's team created a whimsical setting with many elements inspired by Pucci's designs, including the chair coverings and table settings. For brunch, Thierry's served favorites like eggs Benedict and assorted ceviches to the Pucci-clad guests.

—Brittany Peitsmeyer



Artist Gerald Cholot hung garments from oversized balloons draped in Pucci fabric.

"GINZATROPICALIA" TURNS GRAFFITI INTO ART

During Art Basel, the Dacra Development office got a complete overhaul as it hosted the "Ginzatropicalia" exhibit December 6 through 9. The 12,000-square-foot space experienced controlled vandalism as graffiti art covered everything.

Sponsored by Sushi Samba, this exhibit focused on urban street art from the cultures of Japan, Brazil, and Peru, which also influence the restaurant's cuisine. While paintings and sketches appeared on conventional canvases, much of the artists' inspiration overflowed onto the walls and furniture.

"It's rare to get a chance to express yourself like this and not go to jail," said Diet, one of the artists in attendance.

—Erick Cipau

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The massive hotel bar offered guests a cutting-edge cocktail menu, incorporating Stoli's lineup of flavor-infused vodkas.



The Ohranj suite, featuring citrus-colored decor and lighting, provided additional space for guests to lounge.



Local greeters outfitted as concierges depicted a hotel's front desk by checking in guests one by one as they arrived.

Miami Welcomes the Stoli Hotel

Stolichnaya Vodka came alive in the form of the Stoli Hotel with the first of a series of invitation-only events in Miami.

ON JANUARY 16, THE Stoli Hotel opened its doors in Miami, the third location for the traveling entertainment space, which debuted in Los Angeles last May. The invitation-only event was the first of a series planned at the space during its two-and-a-half-week stay in the Magic City.

Legacy Marketing Partners teamed up with creative architecture agency, Pompei A.D. and Cinnabar Production Services to transform downtown's 17,010-square-foot Ice Palace Film Studios into a hotel-themed space inspired by Russia's Hotel Moskva—depicted on the vodka's label.

Upon arrival, guests checked in to the hotel at a reception station manned by greeters outfitted as hotel employees and were treated to amenities such as complimentary spa services in the integrated Stoli Spa, and a wide selection of custom cocktails at the hotel bar. Incorporating one of the most important aspects of a luxury hotel—the high-class suites—the design team created five flavor-inspired guest rooms for lounging—including the elite suite, representing the brand's high-end vodka, which was open to V.I.P.s only.

Stoli Hotel Grand Opening

Catering Bread & Wine Catering
Design/Decor Pompei A.D. L.L.C.
Decor Cinnabar Production Services
PR The Thomas Collective
Production Legacy Marketing Partners
Spa Relax and Rejuvenate
Venue Ice Palace Film Studios

Before moving on to New York this May, the Stoli Hotel is scheduled to host a slew of music, fashion, and sport events through February 1 in Miami, including Dwyane Wade's birthday; an event hosted by fashion label, House of Diehl; and various others hosted by *Modern Luxury*, *944*, and *Elle* magazines. —Brittany Peitsmeyer



Paying homage to Stoli's ultra-luxury vodka, the elite suite was open to V.I.P.s and celebrities only.

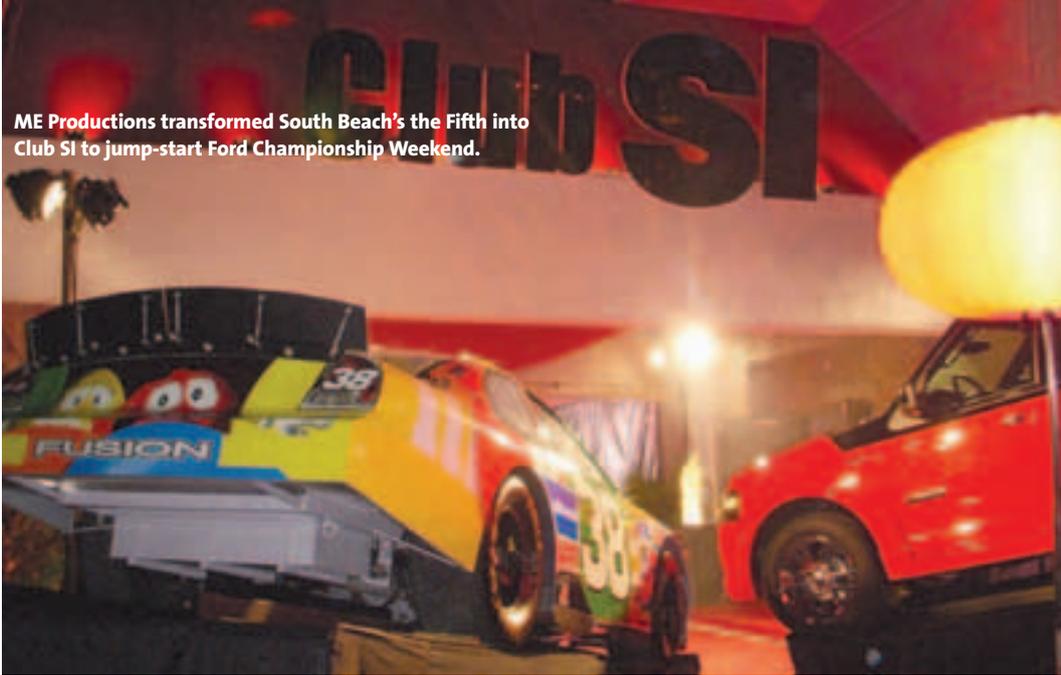
PHOTOS: CRISTIAN LAZZARI



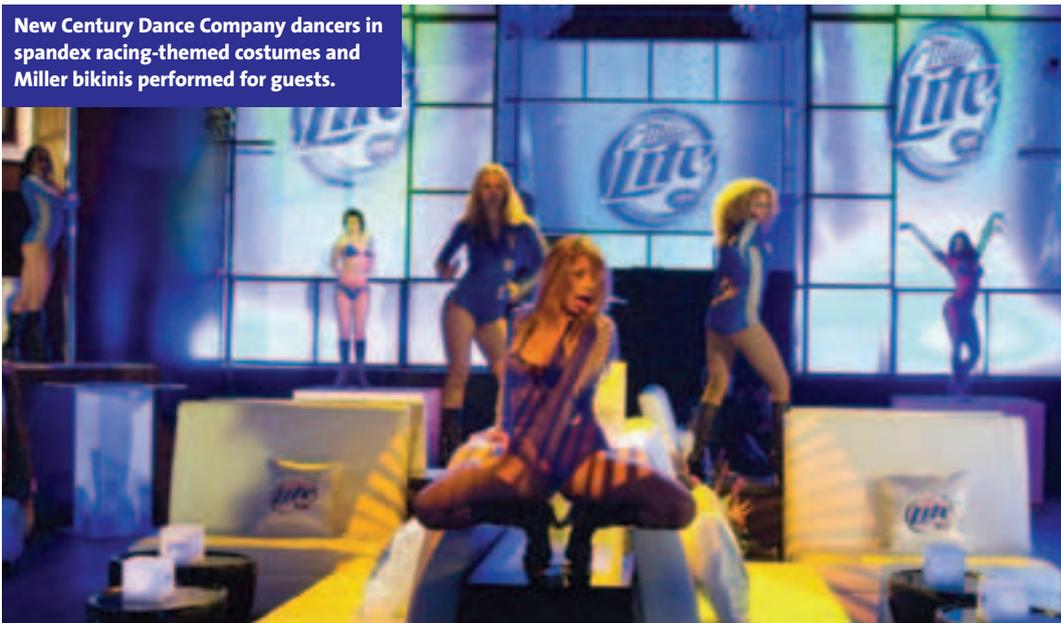
Club SI and Ford logos were all projected onto the walls of the Fifth.



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



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



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

All About Speed

Members of the racing community, celebrities, and athletes partied Miami-style around the city before heading off to the track for the finale of the Nextel Cup Series.

AT SOBE'S THE FIFTH, ME Productions transformed the venue into a specially branded Club SI on November 16. Club SI signage and gobo lighting were added to the side of the building, along with four Ford production vehicles parked on and suspended above the red carpet. The Fifth's high-energy bartenders served liquid libations under So Cool Events' suspended ice sculpture of the club name, while caterwaiters served assorted hors d'oeuvres. Miami's DJ Irie and guest DJ Funkmaster Flex remixed dance favorites as the Miami Heat dancers, donning Sports Illustrated attire, danced atop illuminated acrylic columns throughout the space. To bring the evening to a peak, the Wallflowers also treated guests to a special performance.

Up the beach from Club SI, ME Productions once again transformed one of SoBe's best venues with a bevy of brand-

ing. Mansion hosted more than 400 guests for the "Miami Lites" celebration, developed by ME Productions after they were recruited by GMR Marketing, Miller Lite's alliance marketing agency. Inside the nightclub, ME hung 12 giant air-filled spheres from the ceiling on which custom-made graphics were projected throughout the evening. A 30-foot projection wall constructed around the DJ booth also featured Miller graphics and racing clips. Throughout the night, guests lounged on white couches with custom Miller Lite pillows. Performers from New Century Dance Company danced atop Mansion's platforms. For edible delights, Eggwhites Special Event Catering served sliced prime rib, boneless pork loin, sliced marinated chicken, and more.

Further north at the Trump International Sonesta Beach Resort, the "Miami Lites" weekend continued poolside. Guests arrived via a checkered-flag-inspired entryway and were greeted by a racing girl perched on a branded Miller cube waving her flags. Various branded seating areas, catering stations with tropical fare, and portable bars were placed around the perimeter of the lagoon-shaped pool—where a Miller logo was projected onto the water. A more casual crowd, the 400 guests relaxed poolside to reggae band the Monarchs. —Brittany Peitsmeyer

Nascar weekend events

- Catering** Eggwhites Special Event Catering
- Entertainment** DJ Irie
- Entertainment** New Century Dance Company
- Event Decor** So Cool Events
- Event Management and Production** ME Productions
- Power** Sidram Power
- PR/GMR**
- PR** KSVF Media & Events
- Venue** Mansion
- Venue** Trump International Sonesta Beach Resort
- Venue** The Fifth

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Around the pool, deck chairs were pushed together to create large lounge areas for guests.



Entertainer and acrobat Christopher Oz performed for guests in the lobby.

SoBe-Style NYE Celebrations

Revelers rang in 2008 in style at the Hotel Victor and the Setai on New Year's Eve.

TWO TOP SOUTH BEACH hotels, the Setai and the Hotel Victor, ushered in 2008 in style with jungle- and Moroccan-themed events. At the Setai, New York-based event designer Michael Stern created a jungle-themed paradise for its Lagoon Dinner Dance and Beyond Paradise Party. From New Century Dance Company's more than 50 costumed performers, to the LED-lit tiki torches, guests truly got a big bang for their buck.

With help from local event design company Designs by Sean, Stern and his team created two separate atmospheres, each incorporating nature and the supernatural. The Lagoon Dinner Dance was unique in that it broke age barriers and allowed guests of all ages to celebrate the holiday together, Stern said, while the Beyond Paradise Party was there for the 20- and 30-something set to celebrate well into the morning hours. As midnight approached, actress and singer Jennifer Hudson took the stage to perform her No. 1 hit "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going," from the movie Dreamgirls, finishing with a countdown to 2008.

Down the beach from the Setai, the Hotel Victor hosted a New Year's Eve bash in a Moroccan paradise. Craig Goldstein of the Zanadu Group created a lavish paradise complete

with acrobats, belly dancers, tall palm trees, exotic flowers, rich linens, and more, with assistance from Church Street Concepts and Dorene Collier's Event Show Productions.

Around the pool deck, where the main party took place, Goldstein pushed deck chairs together to create large lounge areas draped with satin linens of gold, green, orange, pink, and purple, and topped with big satin pillows for the partygoers to relax upon. In addition, sun umbrellas covered with sheer draping added to the cabana-esque effect of the arrangements.

Throughout the evening, performers of all kinds entertained guests, including fire-eaters, sword swallows and more, while the evening's headlining band, the Honey Brothers (including *Entourage* star Adrian Grenier), ushered in the new year onstage. —Channing Muller and Brittany Peitsmeyer

Setai and Hotel Victor New Year's Eve Celebration

Audiovisual AVS Entertainment
Catering, Venue Setai
Decor Church Concept Designs
Decor, Entertainment Designs by Sean
Design/Decor, Entertainment, Event Management and Production Zanadu Group
Entertainment Dorene Collier's Event Show Productions
Entertainment New Century Dance Company
Event Management Michael Stern
Lighting, Sound Garrett Production Group
Staging Eventstar
Venue Hotel Victor

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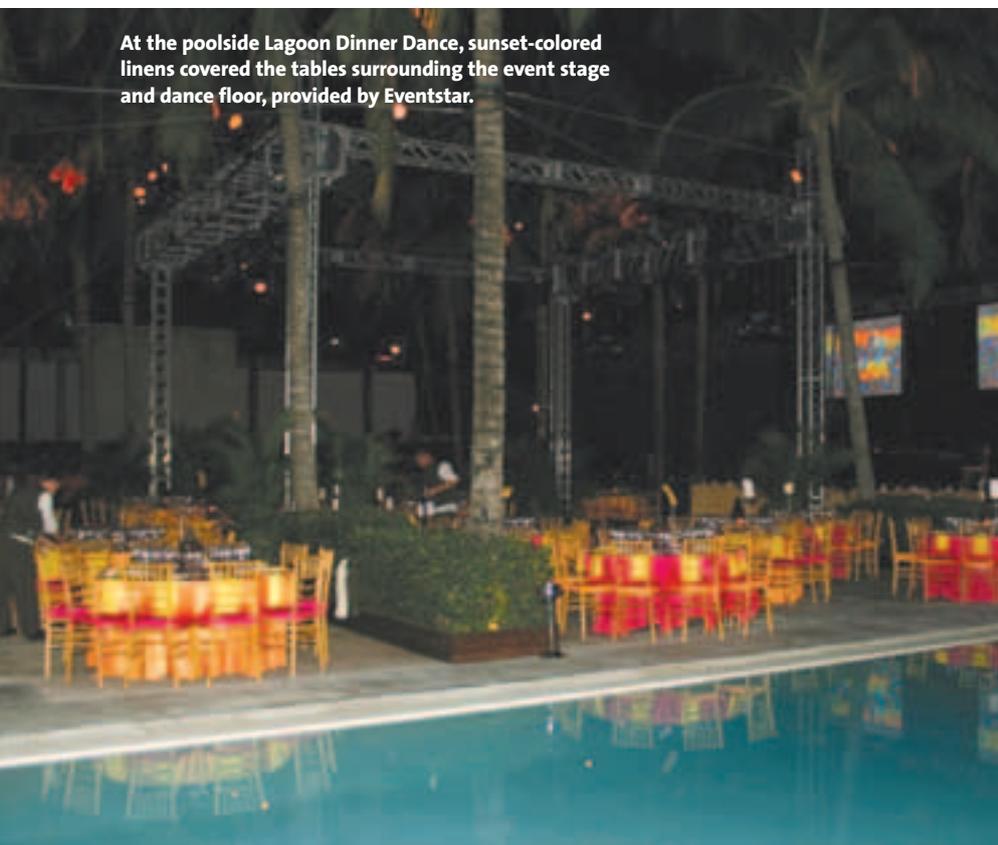
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The Honey Brothers, featuring *Entourage* star Adrian Grenier, were the evening's headline entertainment.



At the poolside Lagoon Dinner Dance, sunset-colored liners covered the tables surrounding the event stage and dance floor, provided by Eventstar.



Michael Stern opted to drain the hotel's pool and create a sunken-in event area to accommodate extra seating for partygoers.



Mike Sipe Entertainment

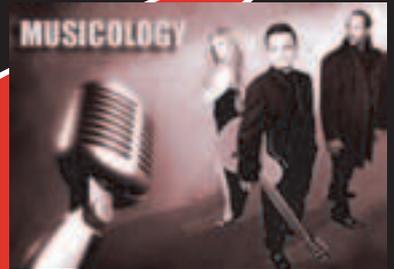
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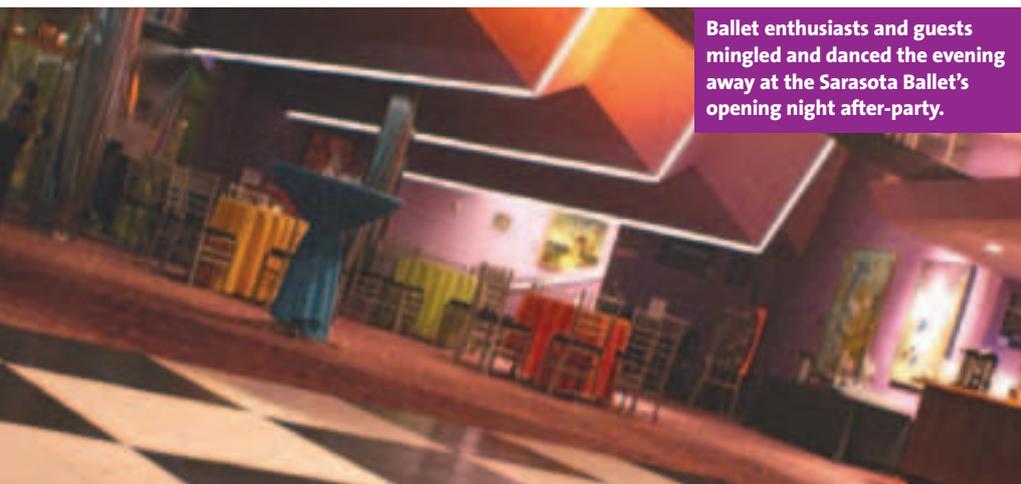
Now Lighting Up South Florida



For the party following the ballet, Michael's on East transformed the grand foyer into a high-energy dance club.



Ivy branches entwined with soft pink roses and lavender served as a romantic, low-profile centerpiece for each table.



Ballet enthusiasts and guests mingled and danced the evening away at the Sarasota Ballet's opening night after-party.



The tables shimmered with silver and pewter linens; place settings with hints of lavender softened the metallic hues.

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Falling in Love at the Sarasota Ballet

The Sarasota Ballet transformed itself into a high-energy dance club to celebrate its new season with "A Love Affair."

ROMANCE FILLED THE AIR at the Sarasota Ballet's opening-night gala, titled "A Love Affair," at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall. Iain Webb, the new artistic director for the ballet, welcomed guests and joined them in celebrating the start of a new era for the company.

Honorary chair and ballet cofounder Jean Weidner, along with co-chairs Lisa Walsh and Emily Walsh-Parry, turned to the premier performance of George Balanchine's *Allegro Brillante* and Sir Frederick Ashton's "The Two Pigeons," for inspiration in creating the unconventional gala.

"We are creating a layered experience," said Walsh-Parry, "more of an extravaganza than the typical opening-night gala."

Michael's on East transformed the grand foyer overlooking Sarasota Bay into a whimsical aviary, complete with various shapes and sizes of gilded birdcages suspended above the dining area. The tables shimmered with silver and pewter linens while place settings with hints of lavender softened the harsh metallics. Ivy branches entwined with soft pink roses and lavender served as romantic, low-profile centerpieces for each table. A small bird's nest sat atop each place setting, a memento of the evening for guests to take home. For dinner, guests had a choice of entrée, including herb-rubbed chateau of beef with a cognac five-spice sauce.

Sarasota Ballet

Bar, Catering, Decor, Flowers
Michael's on East
Entertainment Plush Entertainment
PR Design Marketing Group
Sarasota
Venue Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

Following the ballet performance, attendees found the grand foyer had been once again transformed, but this time into a high-energy after-party with a DJ and dancing. The metallic and lilac hues had been replaced by cocktail tables clad in tropical shades of orange and magenta. Guests, as well as 32 members of the Sarasota Ballet, took to the floor and danced the night away.

—Avian Nobles Curtis



Taste Buds

with Chef Michael Jacobs



BASIC STATS:

Executive Chef:

Gary Nudelman

Company:

Restaurant Associates for the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts (Miami)

Years in the Industry: 22

FIRST STEP INSIDE THE KITCHEN

Chef Gary Nudelman entered a kitchen at the age of 16 to help a friend, was immediately bitten by the food bug, and hasn't looked back since. One of the highlights of his career so far was working alongside chef Eric Ripert when Ripert opened Brasserie Le Coze in Coconut Grove. Later, as a private chef, he was able to travel the world and sample some of the globe's most enticing cuisines, made by those who know them best—their originators. Currently, Nudelman is executive chef for Restaurant Associates, the exclusive in-house caterer at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in Miami.

What is your signature cuisine style, and how do you adapt it to a client's requests?

My basic style is classical French with Latin, Caribbean, and Asian influences, but what I create for each event really depends on what the client is looking for. I take their requests and then customize the menu to their tastes.

What type of cuisine would you say seems to be a common trend nowadays?

We have been selling a lot of short ribs lately. We do a port-braised Kobe short rib with white truffle parsnip puree, glazed baby carrots, and sautéed golden chanterelles. I think the clients find it appealing because of its comfort-food quality, which we take to another level when serving it.

Would you prefer to do a buffet or sit-down dinner for events?

Buffets are probably a little easier for us, but I really enjoy the rush of pumping out hundreds of plates in a matter of minutes for the sit-downs. To put out a plated dinner for 500 guests, we would need approximately 25 to 30 culinary staff, and anywhere from 80 to 100 servers; a buffet for the same amount of people would use about half the amount of staff. When planners decide to do a seated dinner, they need to remember not to overcomplicate the menu. Too many ingredients will make the production process much longer.

What type of over-the-top desserts have you created for a grand finale?

For the opening gala of the Carnival Center, we did 1,800 individual baked Alaskas with a team of chefs from New York. It was a little tricky with the Miami weather, so we used a freezer truck to hold them until it was time to serve. In the end, it went over very well and was a highlight of the night.

From a caterer's perspective, what advice would you give someone planning an event?

Make sure to allow for plenty of time in the planning process, so that you can get exactly what you want from your chef or caterer—within your budget, of course. Avoid making last-minute changes to the menu, as doing so compromises the quality of the product for the event.

Chilled avocado crab soup, brioche with foie rhabarb chutney, and endive fig mascarpone candied pecan.



Port braised Kobe short rib with white truffle parsnip and Chanterelles.



Apple tart with vanilla ice cream and ginger caramel sauce.

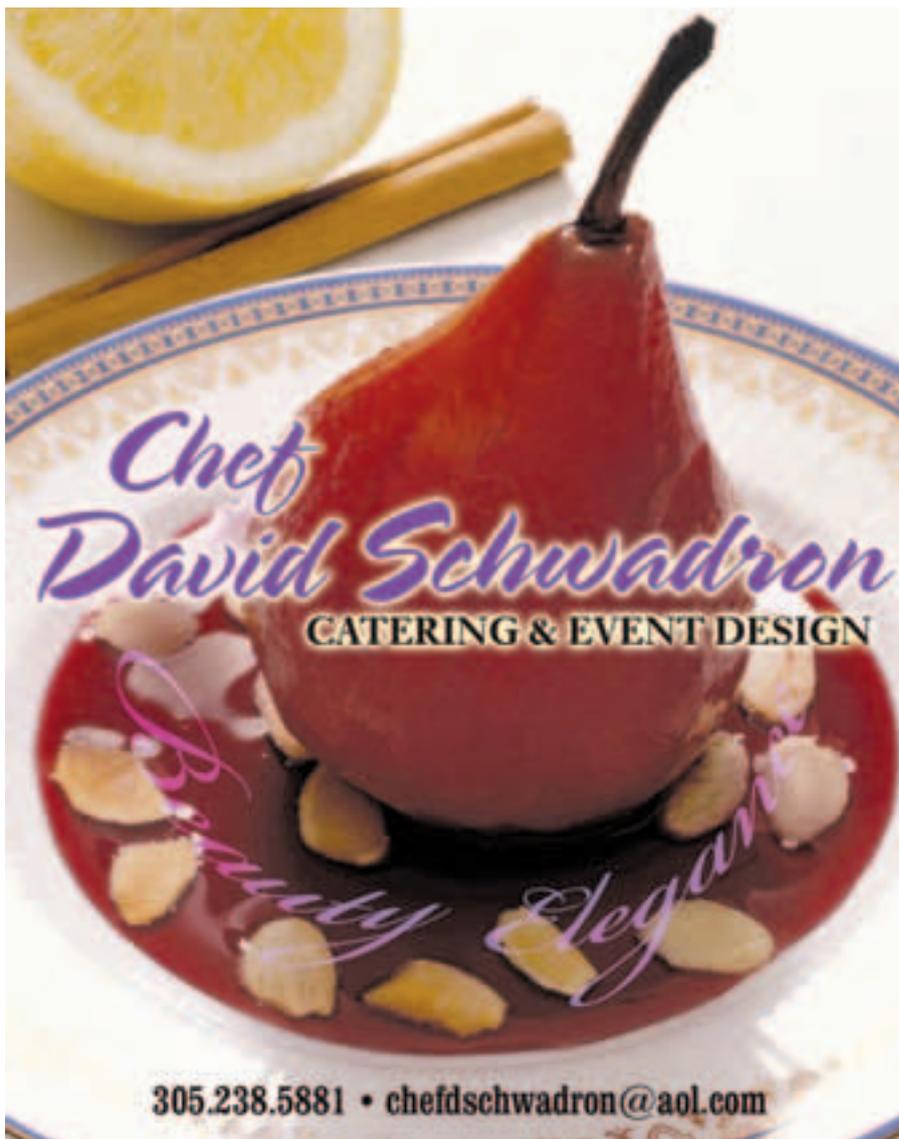


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@ the Chef's Table

Four Florida chefs dish straight from the kitchen and reveal what you should be sure to ask next time you're selecting a caterer. *By Channing Muller*



Michael McMillan

With 25 years of experience in the restaurant industry and 15 years in the kitchen, McMillan has made a name for himself among the top chefs in North Florida. At Opus 39 in St. Augustine, where he is both owner and executive chef, McMillan works with his sous chef each day to create an ever-evolving menu of inventive culinary options hailed by *Jacksonville Magazine* as “a culinary masterpiece.”

What advice would you give planners when hiring a caterer?

Many times an event is being planned six months to a year in advance, so I'd tell them to not set the menu so early on in the planning process. Give the chef the freedom to choose what are the best ingredients at the time of the event. For instance, if you're set on including salmon as your main course but the salmon crop isn't good at that time of year, what can you do? Being more flexible allows us to get what's in season, what's fresh, and which ingredients have had a good crop. As chefs, we want to work with the best ingredients we can get.

What are some of the ingredients you're working with now?

We work with an organic farm in the area, and the cooler weather has allowed them to produce some of the most amazing baby lettuces, turnips, kale, and cooking greens you can imagine.

And for the spring?

In the spring we will start to see lighter sauces and ingredients. Although asparagus is now available year-round, I try to save it as the harbinger of spring that it once was, so I'm excited to begin using that more. But my sure sign that spring has arrived is when the morel mushrooms start becoming available.

Are there food trends to look for this year?

People are going to go toward smaller portions with more natural flavors that allow the ingredients to speak for themselves. There's a lot more science becoming involved in the culinary industry, as well as more unique presentations.

What's the biggest challenge you face when catering an event?

At events you are trying to please not only the host but also all the guests. We have to do something that's on the restaurant level of quality, but also take into account such a wide variety of tastes.

What do you think of food served at events these days?

I'm probably a little biased because I am a chef, but I would like to see more people view the food being served as one of the most important parts of any occasion. If everything but the catering hits the mark, the event is remembered for the bad food, but if everything else fails except the food, then it's also remembered for the food.

Any suggestions on how to change that?

One of the easiest ways to make the food in an event stand out is to make sure it's designed for your occasion, not selected from a cookie-cutter hors d'oeuvres menu and a choice of meat, chicken, or salmon, as seems to be the norm at many large functions now.

UNILATERALLY-SEARED SALMON WITH STEAMED CLAMS AND CANNELINI BEAN RAGOUT.



PHOTOS: SHARON WINSTON