



1ST QUARTER 2006

# THE CLAIRE DIARIES

Hi All,

I hope this end of quarter finds everyone well. AS PROMISED, I am back to doing the Claire Diaries quarterly. Taking it from the top..things I have learned this past quarter.

Some of you may know this past December I went under the knife again. Or rather my eyeballs did in the form of Lasik Surgery. When I was doing the pre-op appointments the doctor said I might have halos at night as a result of the surgery. I shared this with one of the Rx for Catering's resident docs ... my dad ... who is a retired optometrist. He said no, no, no, I wouldn't experience the "halo effect" as a result of surgery because I have "small pupils." The halo affect results when people who have large pupils during the daytime become even larger at night because of the reduced light. Meaning that if during the daylight hours you have large pupils then at night they get even larger, resulting in "the halo effect" because the pupil size uncovers the junction where the surgical area meets the non-surgical area of the cornea a.k.a. the incision junction. So, if you have small pupils in average daylight, when they dilate at night they are still somewhat small, hence no "halo effect." And that would be me! Now why can't I have that same issue with my thighs? He didn't have an answer. When you are the kid in question, dads love you regardless.

P.S. Can you all tell that dad audited this section for accuracy? Like how would I know what an incision junction is?

When working in Arizona my client did a lot of her morning functions outside...this might sound sort of stupid and yet worth writing about. The AM functions outside were cold, and the hotel did "butter in balls" instead of pats. Not a good idea they needed to do pats of butter because the butter wouldn't melt because it was too thick in the ball shape to spread, resulting in people who could not butter anything. Now I know this isn't the end of the world, but note to self used whipped butter when doing an outside function where the weather could be chilly in the morning.

*"I was a vegetarian until I started leaning toward the sunlight."*

Rita Rudner

At the same hotel, one thing banquets did do very well was that they put heat lamps over the coffee cups to keep them warm in the nippy AM hours.

Pier One has some very neat votive candle holders. They are the type that hold approx. 12 votive candles. For a VIP room or coffee break, I recommend buying one holder and then buying shot glasses to place where the candles would be...fill the shot glasses with different candies and nuts. People take a shot glass of snacks that is about the size of a handful. We also used this at a carving station and filled the shot glasses with meat sauces so people just took a shot glass and poured it over their meat.

Good adult candies, Gummy Bears, Starbursts, Tootsie Roll Lollipops and Peanut M&M's are favorites among the candy bars that I do. Hey, I just write'm as I see them. The reason why I share this is that for coffee breaks I have started doing "adult candy bars." This is a candy buffet that the attendees can make make baggies of candy and take with them. This is a great thing to do on departure day when folks are taking flights. Many times I have good luck with just paying the hotel a corkage fee and bringing in my own candy.

*"Life is too short to live the same day twice."*

Jennifer Lopez's character in *Monster-n-Law*

While working in Tucson, Arizona this past quarter, my client is doing an event at Pima Air Museum. This is the third largest air museum in the country and is fabulous. On the way back to the hotel, my DMC rep drove me

past a military airplane graveyard. This is important because in government agreements of disarmament the various governments have to trash X amount of military planes. How do they do this? They take a guillotine and chop the fuselage into 3 sections. They then lay the airplane on its side so when the satellites go by they can take a picture of the tail number. This confirms to the other countries that this airplane is out of commission per the agreement. Thinking I was being CLEVER, I said to the DMC rep, "Why don't they just build "movie set" type airplanes and fool the satellites?" This got me a big roll of the eyes with a, "Yea, that will never work." What I learned is I am not all that clever at times.

*"Horse sense is the thing a horse has which keeps it from betting on people."*  
W.C. Fields

Sophisticated drinks are very much the rage right now. I do have to say the beverage director at the JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort and Spa does some of the best marinated tequilas ever and the presentation is gorgeous. Also trendy is to do thoughtful condiments with the drinks; for example, for a beer, give the recipient a small, soft pretzel. One of the coolest drinks I read about—although the bartender is still working out the method—is pouring a drink (and I think it was a scotch) over a small flame to give it a smoked taste. Now that is sophisticated. Look for this trend to be around for awhile. I also think that people are going to start going away from wine for a bit to play more with alcohol.

Speaking of wine, my "BLAH, BLAH, BLAH" for this issue is Wine Dinners. They're BORING, BORING, BORING. Introduce various alcohols into the different food courses to bring out the flavor. If you are working with different alcohols, look to do different, i.e. Sakes, and liquor that is popular in other countries--just don't stay inside the "VODKA OR RUM" box.

The pastry boomerang effect is starting to come back around, and you heard it here first. This I am thrilled to write about. The trend in pastry for the past several years was to do away with the pastry kitchen and to outsource the majority of this department. Now this is fine and preferred to outsource breakfast rolls and breads as this piece of the puzzle is too time consuming and very temperamental. But, the good news is we are starting to see is the revitalization of the pastry chef at hotels. This is great news as pastry chefs are true food artists. When working at upscale hotels ask if they have a true pastry chef and ask to meet him/her. Also tell them if possible for a VIP dessert buffet you would like to have a pulled sugar centerpiece. Your attendees will love it.

Folks, the heavens are smiling down on me and I have been swamped this 1Q of 2006. So, I apologize in making the Diaries a touch short. Do note my 2Q had a couple of cancellations, so Rx is available should anyone need our services.

Also PLEASE check out the much new and improved Rx for Catering, LLC website. We went RETRO! Go to [Rxforcatering.com](http://Rxforcatering.com) .

As always, thank you for your time in reading the Diaries. Please feel free to pass them along.

Have a safe 2Q.

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