



Claire Diaries ~ 3rd Quarter

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YEAH!! YEAH!! YEAH!! ~ After THREE YEARS COUNT THEM THREE YEARS and numerous attempts I am FINALLY unveiling my new Rx for Catering, LLC Logo. Where did I get such a kool logo you wonder? Folks, pay attention as this is great information. There is a website called designoutpost.com. What you do is fill out the form and you "start" a logo contest and you decide how much prize money and how long you want to run your contest. They have several graphic artists who are part of their "team" and do this on the side. So I had 10 different artists enter my contest, which I posted for a 1 month period with \$150.00 prize money. Believe it or not my prize money was on the higher end of the scale from what other people were offering. I couldn't recommend it enough, it was a great experience and I got EXACTLY what I wanted.

I never think of the future. It comes soon enough.
- Albert Einstein

I learned the meaning of unconditional love recently when my 2.5-year-old niece Olivia spent the night with "Aunt Claire".

A. G-d forbid she would sleep in the guest room; NNNOOOO she wants to sleep with "Aunt Claire".
and
B. Sleep in one spot.

I ended up with 2 hours rest ~ 3 kicks to the stomach; 1 hand in the face and some very serious snoring.

But do I still love her? To be honest with you? At the time I would had to tell you I needed to think about it, but now that some time has passed of course I do..or at least until the next time she sleeps over.

Original Purpose for a Comb: Detangling hair. Another Use: Holding nails in place while you hammer them into wood or walls. Reward: No more bruised fingers -- or egos. Thanks Real Simple Magazine.

Enough is enough...enough of what you ask? 22% service charge on F & B functions that is what I am saying and you should be too! Meeting News magazine wrote an amazing article on this very subject a couple of weeks ago. Not enough folks are using their vocal chords to complain about the 22%

service charge, which is ridiculous. Take tax on top of that and you are EASILY adding an additional 30%+ to your F & B functions. Is this extra money going to wait staff? Probably not. Did you know that you can ask the hotels to give you a breakdown of this service charge and how all the money is divided up? Yup, you sure can. A portion of this money in most instances goes back to the house's bottom line. So basically they are double dipping. And why not? Meeting planners aren't complaining about it. Now your next question is ~ is this negotiable in the hotel contract stages? I haven't seen where it is..the best I can share with you is one night I had lousy service and told the F&B Director I would only pay 18% on that particular function. I think "we" as an industry have to become much more proactive in this area or this is only going to get worse. Now I am gracefully taking a bow and stepping off my soapbox.

Stand up straight!!

Don't lean on anything-walls, desks, doors, barstools, etc. Experts say you'll lose 90% of your presence this way.

Food Trends is something I am constantly being asked about. Trends are very subjective and vary from person to person. So folks, I recommend that you don't get caught up in "what is trendy" because when I have clients that go this direction they tend to use trendy out of context. Focus on what type of foods your group likes and then do a twist on it. For example, if they like cookies ~ add M & M Cookies, Reese's Pieces Cookies etc. to the dull drum mix the hotel offers. Focus on making your event solid and sensible and not to worry about being trendy from a culinary standpoint..and who knows maybe by doing this you will set "your own trend".

OK, BUT if you insist on knowing a trend here is one we are going to see is Flavored Sake, Sake Bars and Sake infused food. What is Sake? It's an alcoholic drink brewed from rice and it has the highest naturally occurring alcohol content of any brewed beverage. There are different grades of sake. The more you mill the rice the better the sake will be. Milling removes the fat and protein from the grains, leading to a cleaner, more elegant flavor . This is Courtesy of Food and Wine Magazine.

A former colleague of mine was attending an outdoor food function when "We were inundated by yellow jackets". After a time, the organizers brought Bounce fabric softener dryer sheets by and stuffed 'em in the flower arrangements at each table. It really worked...trust me, I was a doubting Thomas.

Negotiate food and beverage as well when you are negotiating your hotel contract...This often gets overlooked. When in the contract stages and a hotel says they will have new menus (which translates into higher pricing) prior to your groups arrival here is what I recommend. Negotiate a 10% discount off the new menu prices INSTEAD OF sticking with old priced menu.

Borrow money from pessimists - they don't expect it back.
Steven Wright

Starting to see venues doing a risotto flavored action station. I don't recommend it! My experience with risotto is this it is an item that needs to be cooked individually in a restaurant not in bulk. Couple of reasons..Risotto gets very sticky in the chafing dish and doesn't even look nice...It doesn't hold long..and a lot of folks don't really know what it is ~ stick with a pasta station for better curb appeal.

Now that the weather is turning..do a "soup stations and pair it with different breads, salad and sandwiches " for lunch. Usually I do 4 soup stations and pair one with salad, one with sandwich, one with nacho's and one with different breads.

Some people never loose their touch..that is what I am saying about my 75 year old father..who is a retired eye doc, the old fashioned kind..we all know them..is red brighter than green? one better than two?...As he was adjusting a new pair of glasses he finally decided to share with me after 42 years of life that my left ear is higher than my right. To be honest with you "Who Knew"? He said many people's faces are "A Symmetrical" (meaning that each side is a little different) hence movies stars only want to have one particular side photographed. He continued to explain that people who we refer to as homely ~ are just that because there faces are "Symmetrical" or both sides are exactly the same. I jokingly told him that explains my sister Lois's problem...He didn't think that was too funny.

While doing a site inspection at the 4 Seasons in Scottsdale, Arizona (can we all say LOVELY) my CSM told me that the state of Arizona has more boats per capita than any other state.

With the holiday's closer than we might think ~ Karen Bremer our Rx for Catering, LLC wine expert has shared in article that has been written by her staff about wine pairing. She felt it would be most helpful as we are moving forward with the holidays. If you have a wine question or need a recommendation for your holiday meal you can e-mail her at kbremer@greathospitalityrestaurants.com. Just put Rx for Catering, LLC wine recommendation needed in the subject line. Below is a portion of her article.

Old wine & food matching laws are now outdates. But, there are still guidelines to consider:

Guidelines for wine with fish:

*If serving a red wine, choose one that is young, high acid and fruity

- *Avoid oaky whites or reds
- *With shellfish, use only the lightest reds. Smart to stick with white.
- *For reds, avoid fishy fish (anchovies, sardines)
- *For red wines, “browning” the fish may help (broiling, grilling or using meat juices)

Guidelines for wine with meat:

- *White meats in cream sauces are generally good with white wine
- *White meats with “browning” can work nicely with red wines
- *Red meats, cooked rare work well with red wine
- *Red meats, cooked with certain spices or offbeat techniques, can work well with a white wine

Guidelines for wine with cheese:

- *Firm, mild and dry cheeses work best with red wine
- *Soft cheeses that are fatty or creamy make red wine taste dull
- *Smelly, salty or blue-veined cheeses overwhelm red wine
- *White wines are generally not well suited for cheese (Sauternes)

Guidelines for the order of wines:

- *The issue of a white wine before a red or a red wine before a white has little to do with color
- *If the white wine is heavy and the red wine is light, the white will show better second
- *Blushes are most often light; they are best used first
- *The classic order of a dry wine to a sweet wine make a lot of sense
- *If a sweet wine is served first, make sure the second wine is not extremely dry, tart or thin

To be intelligent is to be open-minded, active-minded, and persistently experimental.

- Leo Stein, "Journey into the Self"

Last but not least, I had the absolute honor of teaching a couple of food and beverage seminars last week at Plan Your Meetings Magazine’s annual trade day. As a result of that seminar there are several new folks that are now signed up for the Claire Diaries. Welcome aboard and I hope you enjoy them.

Thank you to everyone for your time and please pass the diaries around.

Claire R. Gould
 Owner
 Rx for Catering, LLC

PS ~ please e mail me should you need to unsubscribe with a note telling me to

take your off my mailing list. AND I promise to make the Diaries more visual next issue.