



Hi Folks,

Like could I be ANY LATER in getting the diaries out?

Two weeks ago I did a site inspection at Johnson Space Center in Houston. The special events facility is truly fabulous. They have several presentations and IMAX movies that are available throughout. TONS to do...while sitting in some of these presentations this is what I learned.

Regarding traveling to Mars: this is a 1000 times farther from Earth than the moon. A trip from the earth to Mars will be a 3 year voyage. A trip to the moon is 3 days. In 2015 astronauts are going back to the moon in preparation for Mars, which will be a couple of years later.

This new space shuttle actually will have 2 shuttles that leave the earth separately. The first space shuttle will have the supplies and leave 2 days earlier than the astronauts. It will circle the orbit, and the astronauts will blast off 2 days later to connect with the supply module and head to destination moon. The next obvious question is what if the supply shuttle takes off and the weather is bad for the astronauts. Simple. The supply shuttle will circle the orbit and the astronauts will have to wait approximately 30 days before the conditions are right to connect in space.

Moon dust is very corrosive and just finds its way into everything so they have to plan for that.

There is gravity on the moon 30% less of what we see on earth making jumping higher and SLLLOOOWWWEERRRR.

While working last month in Paris, a client treated one of my bosses and me to a dinner for two at La Table de Joël Robuchon. The world-renowned chef has a formal and a casual dining restaurant in the City of Lights. Our reservation was at the casual restaurant, which in reality isn't so casual. Let's face it, there's nothing casual about a 27 Euro (\$36 USD) bowl of gazpacho. How was La Table de Joël Robuchon? Definitely worthy of this great chef's reputation.

What did we have? The seven-course tasting menu for 150 Euros each (\$202 USD). This was a great decision; it gave us a wide sampling of his various cooking skills and also exposed us to his thoughtful food presentations, which were specifically designed for each course.

OK, folks, here is where you need to pay attention: The most important thing was that the entire menu flowed. His culinary team really understands the big picture of texture combinations, taste and variety in presentation, not only as individual courses, but also as an entire menu. Most chefs "get that" in theory, but rarely can execute it.

The reason I am writing about this is the same concept applies to banquets. As you are working with catering to design menus, remember to look at the big picture. Consider the entire meal experience,

not just one element (a.k.a. a course). Visualize the menu in your mind, focusing on how everything transitions as you move through each course and/or function. By doing this, you will give your guests a more complete culinary experience.

“Don’t cry because it’s over. Smile because it happened.”
Dr. Seuss

When serving food on a buffet, make sure the food is individually marked, not put in a picture frame. No one even notices the picture frame as they get busy talking and then they go to take something further down the buffet line and the menu information isn’t available.

Food that is not trendy but that I am going to start playing with for desserts is cotton candy. There are a lot of adults who love cotton candy, and I would really like to somehow see it in different flavor forms served very cleverly on a dessert or making it an action station. Look out Tony Conway with Legendary Events, I plan on asking you to play with me on this one.

“I cannot give you the formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure—which is: Try to please everybody.”
Herbert Swope, address, Dec. 20, 1950

While driving the other day I passed a cheerful looking yellow VW Bug, and what did this clever girl have as her vanity plate? “Swat Me.”

This June it was an honor to work the Paris Airshow for the fourth time. I designed a chalet and handled all logistics for a company that is engineering the world’s first supersonic business jet. So, how fast is fast? Paris to New York in 4 hours 14 minutes—that is how fast is fast. After the show I got an invitation to go to Reims for the day, or what is better known to us as CHAMPAGNE Country. We did a VIP tour of Moët & Chandon which was really great. What made the tour so good is that they kept the information informative and yet simple to digest. What I didn’t know is that several labels are under Moët’s umbrella. I knew Dom is, but I didn’t realize Veuve Cliquot is. We also asked about the people who twist bottles of champagne a quarter of a rotation a day. Our guide explained that they have machines to do that but they still employ 10 people to do this task. So guess just take a GUESS on how many bottles a day they can rotate? She said averages 35,000 to 50,000 bottles a day per person! I just laughed to myself—so on a slack day they only do 32,000 bottles?

“I always say a goal without a deadline is just a dream”
Susan Davidson ~ My beloved business coach who ALWAYS stays on me

Crudite Trays—Many times people put cauliflower and broccoli on the trays. I keep mine simple—people are most apt to eat carrots, cucumbers, radishes, olives and celery. I ask for just these vegetables to maximize what people are going to eat.

Disappointing hotel of the quarter..and of the year. Marriott World Center in Orlando, Florida. Normally, I LOVE this hotel but not this time around. It has gotten too big and doesn't pay attention to the customer needs and has lost touch with service. I was there working for a friend of mine and at every part of the hotel we went to the service was LOUSY. First, the front desk clerk didn't know how to split a portfolio, and then the sport's bar was understaffed. When I asked them to make more popcorn I got "the look," and it never did happen. I had to ask engineering 3 times to bring a power strip. We had a medical emergency and risk management came up without his medical kit. The food court was beyond understaffed on a day that they had a group in house that they knew would be using this area for lunch. This hotel used to be really fantastic, and I hope they swing back around on guest service, as I think this happens when upper upper management and corporate tries milking the system to accommodate the bottom line. Focus on great service and the bottom line will take care of itself.

"I'm not bad. I'm just drawn that way."
Jessica Rabbit

Thanks, folks, for reading the diaries and do feel free to pass them along.

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