



They're all good seats: General admission guests are treated like VIPs at rounds featuring stylish Chameleon "X Back" chairs (1). Jon Bon Jovi (with guitar) runs through his hits for guests (2).



RESOURCES

CATERING
Bellagio Hotel
 888/987-3456
www.bellagio.com

ENTERTAINMENT
Always Entertaining
 702/757-3232
www.alwaysentertaining.com

LINEN
BBJ Linen
 702/228-0611
www.bbjinlinen.com

SPECIALTY FURNITURE
Chameleon Chair
 310/973-8200
www.chameleonchair.com

Lounge 22
 818/502-0351
www.lounge22.com

help the planner "focus" her decision-makers. Because the event was their first foray, the Grand Prix group "had no hands-on experience with how you can and can't plan things," Talarico says.

EVERYBODY'S SOMEBODY Less than three weeks out, the guest count was hovering at 1,000, which gave the event team a lot more ballroom space to work with. Talarico and crew put in place the final event details, and on April 5, they made it happen.

At the client's request, everything from arrivals to dinner was designed to accommodate the gala's multiple ticket-price tiers seamlessly. While every guest got the red-carpet treatment, VIPs enjoyed the added extravagance of media photos in front of a step-and-repeat backdrop. Upon entry to the curtained-off reception area, all guests enjoyed martinis served from lighted trays by models from sponsor Bombay Sapphire. VIPs could escape to a posh "retreat" while regular folks mingled among branded ice bars, LED-framed live models and silent auction items.

Once inside a main event space—done up in Bombay Sapphire shades of blue, white and silver—general admission guests proceeded to traditional banquet rounds surrounded by Chameleon Chair seats with

gleaming metal backs. VIPs took their places at Lounge 22 Glochairs along "unique custom trough tables," Talarico recounts. Way down in front, a VIP pit featured "leather couches with individual butler service for each couch" and unique dinner items such as roasted baby lamb chops and truffle potato martinis, Talarico says.

CAUSE AND EFFECT While a candid Talarico concedes that the planning process for the \$1.5 million event might have benefited from more conference calls to "avoid gaps in waiting for answers to proceed," in the end, communication difficulties didn't interfere with the event's success.

Getting the complex event right created a "very high-stress" atmosphere for all parties involved, Talarico notes. But it also provided great satisfaction to its production team. "The Keep Memory Alive Foundation for Alzheimer's and Brain Disease Research is a charity MGM Mirage is a staunch supporter of," Talarico says. "And we were happy to see such a worthy cause gain more awareness and much-needed funding." ●

MGM Mirage Events 3665 Industrial Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89109; 702/792-7798; www.mgmmirageevents.com.