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Pyramid Power



Big, Bigger, Biggest...

Party-goers also buzzed about the custom-built gold pyramids made of fresh flowers weighing in at 50 pounds apiece that enlivened the G.WIZ Butterfly Ball. The science museum had played host to a King Tut exhibit all year, and Molly DeMeulenaere and Keren Shani-Lifrak of Rambunktious Productions played on the theme for the party decor.

The same team collaborated with furniture designer Jason Champion to craft a 100-foot-long fantasy tunnel for the Sarasota Film Festival's Reel Experience party at The Lake Club in Lakewood Ranch. "When our clients start talking about decor, we do not take them into the warehouse and tell them to pick what they want," explains Shani-Lifrak. "We ask them to describe their vision. And then we make it happen."

Their nonconformist concepts have involved draping fabric over aircraft cable to create a sumptuous tent in the desert and building gargantuan, pineapple-shaped live topiaries. A current project for the Boys & Girls Clubs has Rambunktious hard at work on two- and three-dimensional city skylines and comic book characters for a Hometown Heroes theme. "Nobody wants to do just another gala," says DeMeulenaere. "You must intrigue guests and give them something they have never seen before."

Come Together

Collaborate with another nonprofit on your next big bash? It's an idea worth exploring.

What if benefit planners could ride out a turbulent economy in the same boat? Collaboration between causes is a concept the women behind Rambunktious Productions believe could work. "By joining together, you double your budget and halve your expenses," says Karen Shani-Lifrak. "You increase your pool of prospective sponsors along with your guest list. You have a greater number of volunteers. And so many causes lend themselves to partnership because their mission is similar and their target audience is comprised of people who share the same goals and vision." Charities for mental health issues, hospitals and medical research make a good fit, Shani-Lifrak and Molly DeMeulenaere say. Children's services often mesh with human resources, education and the arts. "Collaboration ties people together in a common pursuit," says Shani-Lifrak. "Partnering may mean that smaller committees and causes can combine their efforts and resources to create something really big."

