

BIZBASH

FLORIDA

EVENT REPORT 02.25.08 6:02 PM

Best of the Best: Round Four

The top chefs, wineries, and foodies came out to the America Airlines Arena to participate in the Best of the Best event during the South Beach Wine and Food Festival.

For an event where the bar was set high by the name alone, top chefs and wine merchants had to be on their game to ensure that no palate was left wanting. The fourth annual Wine Spectator's Best of the Best, once again at the [American Airlines Arena](#), has been a year in the making-planner Susan Kleinberg and Florida International University volunteers set to work on this year's event immediately following the close of the festival last year.

"We wanted to create a more intimate experience for the people," said Kleinberg.



The Setai, Joy Wallace, and Panache went with an Asian theme for the outdoor welcome area.
BizBash

Not an easy feat for an event that expected upward of 1,500 people. Thirty-five of the best chefs from hotels and restaurants around the country were brought on board and set up in the arena's box suites to prepare their creations right in front of attendees. To round out the experience, each of the chefs was paired with at least one wine merchant—each of whom had received a ranking of 90 or higher from Wine Spectator magazine for high quality.

At the beginning of the night, guests were given a complimentary wineglass from Riedel encumbered by it.

In an attempt at something new, a welcoming area was set up outside the doors of the arena, for the first time in the event's history, with an Asian theme created by [the Setai](#), [Panache: A Classic Party Rental Company](#), and [A Joy Wallace Catering Production and Design Team](#). Here, cater waiters served chilled sake to attendees as they entered the bamboo gateway and stepped into a Zen garden.

As they made their way into the arena, guests were free to wander from one box suite to another and interact with the chefs. Among the delicacies served were tender cuts of the finest meats, inventive variations with fresh seafood, potpies and cutlets, sauces running the gamut from spicy to sour to sweet, creamy polentas and risottos, and more.



A Joy Wallace Catering Production and Design Team, the Setai, and Panache: A Classic Party Rental Company created a stylish, comfortable lounge area outside the arena.
BizBash

Wine Spectator held a tasting competition in its suite where tasters sampled unlabeled wines and identified them in three categories: origin, year, and type. Roth Käse U.S.A. Ltd. and Emmi International Ltd. had a cheese tasting station right across from Misha's Cupcakes' delicious confections. The silent auction, which featured vintage wines and travel and entertainment packages, was held in the Dewar's lounge.

-Erick Cipau

Event Design/Décor: [A Joy Wallace Catering Production & Design Team](#)

Event Design/Décor: [Panache: A Classic Party Rentals Company](#) - Pompano ★

Event Design/Décor: [The Setai](#)

PR: [Brustman-Carrino](#)

Venue: [American Airlines Arena](#)