



A Eureka! Moment

The votes were close, but the Florida team won over judges and attendees alike

By Rachel Globus

All three teams competing in Project Eureka! The Event Solutions Challenge gave attendees and judges a challenge of their own when it came time to vote for a winner.

"The popular voting was closer than we've seen in the event's three years," says Pat McCarrell, publisher of *Event Solutions*.

Kirk Spahn, co-founder of Ty Ku, the sake-based liqueur that the teams were tasked with launching for the competition, was equally impressed.

"They're all incredible," he said of the tented spaces. "We are blown away."

Competition was close, but at the end of the day, Florida Flamingos team members Ira Mitchell-Steiman, Stacy Stern, Noel Brown and Byron Loper took home the \$5,000 grand prize.

Carol Cundey, marketing communications manager for Eureka!, the first-year sponsor of the competition, said the company's main goal was to get planners thinking of tents as something more than a cover in case of inclement weather.

"We want them to think of the tent as an event venue — a blank canvas," she said. "We were hoping we would see some

creative things, and boy, did we ever."

For the first time, a panel of judges comprising event industry leaders interviewed the creators of the event spaces and scored the spaces on specific criteria.

Joining Cundey and McCarrell on the panel were Michael Miner, vice president of marketing for Classic Party Rentals; Eddie Diaz, president of Encore Creations; and Mike Morse, assistant sales manager at Eureka!.

The winning team's event space set itself apart by playing on all five senses to fully brand Ty Ku as a hip new liqueur, a fact not lost on the judging panel.

The judges noted the use of scent tubes, green gobos and a complete green cover over the top of the tent canvas as details that gave the space "a high-end feel," Miner said.

The judges' vote, which took into account the ability to sell the concept, teamwork of the designers, and overall look and use of the tent, went to the Florida team by a whisker, McCarrell says, as did the popular vote by attendees. **ES**

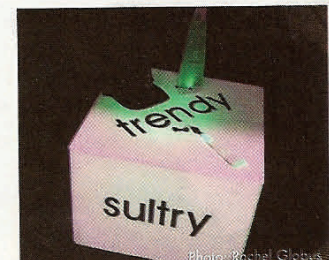
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Winning team members (from left to right) Stacy Stern, Ira Mitchell-Steiman, Noel Brown (front) and Byron Loper.



This Fortuny-pleated fabric from Darnell Fabrics and Over the Top Inc. set the Florida team's tent apart from the others.



Lighted furniture (BW Designs) featured buzzwords describing Ty Ku that the team gleaned from celebrity quotes and press material.