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How To work Well with your Caterer

By Françoise Jarry

10. Plan ahead and save the date.
9. Discuss your expectations in terms of set up, menu, staff and rentals.
8. Keep in mind that a seamless organization is critical to the success of your event.
7. Remember that delicious food is always a sure win.
6. Trust the professionals: impeccable service is almost as important as food in the eyes of your guests.
5. Don't pretend cost does not matter: it always does!
4. Select your menu within your budget comfort zone: if you choose the right caterer, you can put together a beautiful menu without breaking the bank.
3. Be aware that passed hors d'oeuvre tend to be very labor intensive and therefore expensive. Sometimes, stationary platters can offer a cost effective alternative.
2. Take your caterer's advice as to the number of servers needed. A proper server/guest ratio will ensure that your event runs smoothly.
1. Offer feedback. If you were pleased with your caterer's services, let him know. If not, let him know why. Good communication is always the best recipe for a successful party.

Francoise Jarry and Leslie Williams are business partners at The Perennial Chef, a full service caterer in Bedford Hills and Ridgefield, Connecticut. Leslie's brother, Chef Michael Williams, a graduate of Kenyon College and the French Culinary Institute in New York, specializes in a light and refreshing style of cuisine best described as French Californian. For more information, visit www.theperennialchef.com.

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