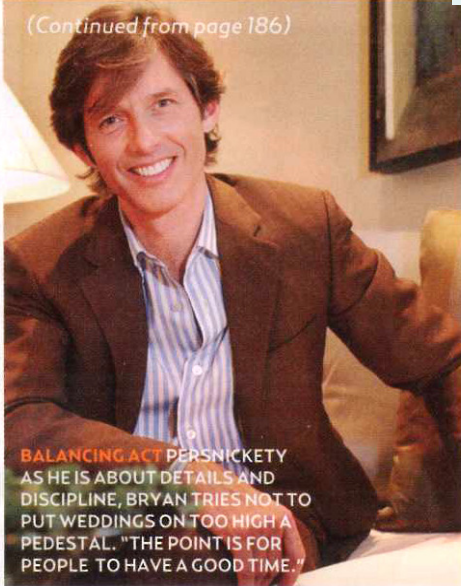


(Continued from page 186)



BALANCING ACT PERSNICKETY AS HE IS ABOUT DETAILS AND DISCIPLINE, BRYAN TRIES NOT TO PUT WEDDINGS ON TOO HIGH A PEDESTAL. "THE POINT IS FOR PEOPLE TO HAVE A GOOD TIME."

HIRING A FORMER frat boy to be your planner may sound like wedding suicide, but in the case of Bryan Rafanelli, it means an excellent adventure. "A wedding is an important event in a family's life, but it should also be fun," says Bryan, whose clients include such celebrated socializers as Bill Clinton and Elton John. "Receptions aren't a one-second experience. When a person first looks at a party, she may see a big room of aqua, but after a minute she'll start noticing color variations and textures." His devotion to detail (providing a backup boutonniere for the groom to replace the flower that's inevitably crushed) is leavened with a fine sense of humor, proving that one of life's most beloved rituals has its lighter side, too.



TOUCHY TOKENS BRYAN LIKES TO CREATE CENTERPIECES THAT "FOLKS CAN PICK UP AND TOUCH," LIKE GROUPS OF SMALL VASES AND BEAUTIFUL GLASS PAPERWEIGHTS.

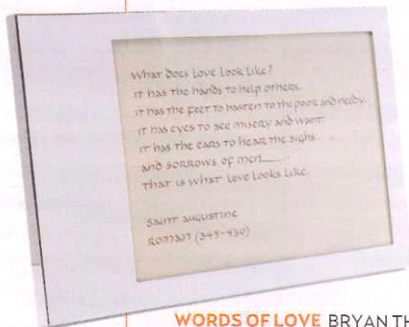
FINGER FOOD SOME OF BRYAN'S FAVORITE HORS D'OEUVRES INCLUDE MINI GRILLED CHEESE SANDWICHES WITH TOMATOES, MINI MEATBALLS AND SAUCE, AND SMALL MINT JULEP CUPS FILLED WITH FRENCH FRIES.



BRYAN RAFANELLI

Rafanelli Events | Boston & Palm Beach

ALL STIRRED UP "I'M NOT A FAN OF THE SIGNATURE COCKTAIL," SAYS BRYAN, WHO CHAMPIONS DRINKS LIKE VODKA MIXED WITH PINK LEMONADE—OR WITH DIET COKE.



WORDS OF LOVE BRYAN THINKS FAVORS ARE GREAT WHEN THEY HAVE A CONNECTION TO THE COUPLE; HE SUGGESTS FRAMING A POEM, LOVE NOTE, OR FAMILY PHOTO.

BRYAN'S TAKEAWAY TIPS

"Want to save money? Skip the champagne toast—at some hotels, it can be \$16 a glass. Multiply that by 200 guests! People are happy to toast with the drink they've ordered."

"An easy way to cut costs during cocktails is to forgo live music and have it piped in. Nobody's going to notice those three musicians playing in a corner, and you'll easily save \$400."

Turn to Shopping Guide

PHOTOS: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF BRYAN RAFANELLI; TED MORRISON; ALISON DINNER/GETTY IMAGES; TED MORRISON. CENTER: TED MORRISON. PROP STYLIST: STEPHEN ANG.