

EVENT REPORT

A (Foreign) Affair To Remember

Members of the Austrian Consulate of Orlando enjoyed a taste of home at a dinner reception in celebration of its recently appointed honorary consul.

Jamie O'Donnell of [Jamie M. O'Donnell Public Relations & Events Inc.](#) gave guests a taste of Austria at a dinner commemorating the naming of Toby Unwin as honorary consul for the Austrian Honorary Consulate of Orlando.



Performing from the home's balcony, a string quartet from Beautiful Music kept guests entertained throughout the night.



Birchmore Group's lighting kept the pool area lit enough for people to mingle.



Lee Forrest Design was responsible for the centerpieces, which used mostly red and white colors to reflect the Austrian flag.



Taking place in the back deck of Toby Unwin's home, guests got a beautiful view of Big Sand Lake as they ate.



The 125 attendees were given red carpet treatment, as they entered the honorary consul's home to the sounds of this female

**Austrian Consulate of Orlando's opening reception
Private home
Friday, 10.27.06, 7PM to 10 PM**

**Catering/Rentals
Entertainment
Event Design/Management
Flowers
Invitations
Lighting
Photography
Valet**

**Puff 'n Stuff Catering LLC
Beautiful Music
Jamie M. O'Donnell Public Relations & Events Inc.
Lee Forrest Design
Dragonfly Custom Design
Birchmore Group
Christie's Photographic Studios Orlando
Triple Crown Valet**

"After meeting with the new consulate and discussing their desire to host an event with the purpose of introducing the new Orlando branch to important members of the community, I wanted to create an event that would immerse guests and transport them to the heart of Austria," O'Donnell said. "It was important that we design an elegant and experiential event that highlighted the best of Austria, through authentic dishes and wines, musicians playing classical music from famous Austrian composers, and more."

The black tie event, held at Unwin's expansive home on Big Sand Lake, welcomed about 125 guests, including Austrian ambassador to the United States Dr. Eva Nowotny and George Rodon, a representative of Mayor Richard Crotty, who presented a proclamation commemorating the opening of the consulate and declaring October 27 as Austrian Day in Orange County.

The event details were tasteful and thoughtful, starting with black and red invitations by [Dragonfly Custom Design](#) featuring the crest of the Austrian flag as a seal. Dragonfly even created real postage featuring the same crest.

Live music from a harpist welcomed guests as they made their way down a velvet-roped red carpet. Then they had their picture taken by [Christie's Photographic Studios Orlando](#) in front of the American and Austrian flags. On their way out later that night, guests received their photos in commemorative frames.

[Lee Forrest of Lee Forrest Design](#) created about 17 floral arrangements of various sizes, displayed throughout the house and pool area and reflective of the colors on the Austrian flag. He used red Charlotte roses, red opium roses, burgundy black baccarat roses, wine-colored black magic roses, green and white hydrangeas, pale yellow stock, seeded eucalyptus, lime green hanging amaranthus, and magnolia foliage.

The back deck areas and pool each featured two bar-top style tables, each draped in a rich iridescent burgundy taffeta and topped with an arrangement flanked by tea light candles. A string quartet from [Beautiful Music](#) performed on the second floor balcony in the back of the home throughout the night.

Attendees enjoyed a diverse butler-passed menu, inspired by Austria and created by [Puff 'n Stuff Catering LLC](#). Items included mini wiener schnitzel tender veal cutlets breaded and served with a warm mushroom dipping sauce; buckwheat pancakes with smoked salmon finished with sour cream and fresh dill; and chicken and baby roulades with béchamel on a toasted crouton. The cocktail menu was as varied. Guests had their choice of peach or peppermint schnapps, a bright blue 'ElectricTini,' or wine. The wines served, Gruner Veltliner (white) and Gradenthal (red), were shipped directly from Austria specifically for the event.

Passed desserts included apple-, cherry-, and cheese-filled strudels; cheese-filled crepes; and chocolate cake.

—Matthew Porter

Photos: [Debra Brett Photography](#)