

# Clean and Simple

**C**lean, pared-down design in black and white was a winner at the Sixth Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards. Held in March at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, the SAG Awards drew a crowd of 1,064 professional performers.

Designer Michael Venedicto of Pasadena, Calif., served as art director for the televised event. To create a clean, contemporary look, he used rectangular tables instead of round. He says the rectangles are crowd pleasers because they provide a more intimate setting than rounds do. "There is no distance between people." They are also easier to navigate around—"which pleased the fire marshal during the inspection."

Venedicto cites the principles of minimalism and balance as the foundation for the event's design. "You don't need 15 different design elements to impress," he says.

He chose the opposing elements of fire and water for the table decor. He filled shallow, rectangular Plexiglas trays with an inch of water and crowds of white votive candles to create the centerpieces.

White anemones and arabica floated in the trays.

To balance the white centerpieces, Venedicto wrapped the tables in black stretch covers, which he created for the event. Silver-colored threads wove through the black cloth, creating a unique optical effect. "When the camera hit the tables, they looked silver from one direction and black from the other," he explains.

The flatware featured a "clean, contemporary, slightly Asian look," says Venedicto. Each guest sat down to a chop plate bearing an artful arrangement of shiitake mushroom steak, sesame-crusted beef with shozu, grilled ahi tuna with ponzu sauce, and a smoked salmon Napoleon. Tommy Tang's Global Cuisine of Los Angeles provided the food. Regal Rents of El Segundo, Calif., supplied the tables, black chiavari chairs and dinnerware.

Andrea Wyn Schall, owner of Los Angeles-based A Wynning Event, coordinated the event. She says synchronizing her agenda with that of the television show producers was a challenge. "Only on the days the TV production crew wasn't working on the stage could we come in and lay down carpet around the staging, and so forth."

The SAG Awards is not the only televised show featuring Venedicto's design. He currently appears on A&E's "House Beautiful" program, on which he "Tricks of the Trade"



Have a seat (above): Clean design in black and white, rectangular tables and an Asian-inspired dinner greet the attendees of the Sixth Annual SAG Awards.

All set (right): Andrea Wyn Schall with Gary Arabia (left) and Tommy Tang, co-owners of Tommy Tang's Global Cuisine.



discloses design tips in his segment. —T.M.

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