

eventPROFILE



EVENT: Opening Night Party for 2011 International Pow Wow, a travel industry event held in San Francisco
THEME: Rock the Night
VENUES: Alcatraz and Pier 39
ATTENDEES: About 4,500 from 70 countries
BUDGET: Lavish

THE WHOLE WORLD *is* WATCHING

Opening Night Party for 2011 International Pow Wow.

BY JANET FULLWOOD

FIRST WOW: Attendees were ferried 600 at a time from Pier 33 to Alcatraz Island on vessels operated by Hornblower Cruises & Events. Hornblower's largest vessel, the 2,200-passenger San Francisco Belle, was docked for the evening at "The Rock." Three ballrooms on three levels were decked out with elaborate food and beverage stations. Elsewhere, guests could enjoy a photo booth, a gaming station and other entertainment elements often incorporated into San Francisco events. "We dressed it up pretty lavishly while still doing a good representation of what

who makes a living startling unsuspecting tourists in the touristy Fisherman's Wharf district), were hired to escort Pow Wow delegates arriving from Alcatraz to the second staging area, where they danced to live music, checked out the shops and noshed on seafood, chowder and other dishes representative of the city.

CHALLENGES: "The large number of people and making sure they understood the flow of the evening was the biggest challenge," said Firth. "A lot of information was rushing past these delegates. We had to



events held on our boats are like," said Hornblower Spokeswoman Tegan Firth. While at Alcatraz, guests could tour the infamous former prison on their own or enjoy hosted tours and exhibits. A reception was held in the shower room where prisoners once were scrubbed down on arrival.

SECOND WOW: The second half of the party was held at the Pier 39 which, in honor of the event, was closed to the public for only the second time in its history. San Francisco street characters (including "Bush Man,"

make sure they knew they were going to Alcatraz and Pier 39 and how they were going to get there and to the buses. We mitigated a lot of those challenges by planning way in advance. Our first planning committee meeting was two years before the event."

REWARDS: "We could do it on a lavish budget because we were entertaining the top tour operators in the world," said Firth. "This event let us become a part of the city spirit of "let's show them the best that you are." 🍷

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