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LePAGE, PA.

Focus on Pat LePage

Arranging panache takes woman's touch

By ED PICCININ
Business Reporter

Pat LePage — The Arranger — has a mission: To bring elegance back into home entertaining and business parties.

"Entertaining doesn't have to be stiff and boring," she says. "The best party is the one where the hosts have as much fun as their guests."

LePage, of the real estate ilk (her "uncle Ted" is better known as Albert Edward, founder of A.E. Le Page) decided years ago she didn't want to pursue that career. So, recently, she started up her own business, L'arranger Limited, a home and business entertainment consulting firm.

And when LePage throws a party, it's done with panache.

There was the Canadian Opera Company Peel Guild's homecoming reception for famous Canadian opera tenor Ermanno Mauro. Following his singing of *Turandot* at the O'Keefe Centre, 100 guests turned up for the party. Of course, LePage went for the Chinese theme to match the opera: gold tablecloths, a large black treble clef tucked in amongst a massive floral arrangement and bright red napkins with *Turandot* embossed on them for guests to take home as souvenirs.

And there was the "let-your-hair-down" pool party last June for 65 people, including much of the New York Metropolitan Opera Company.

After the company's grilling tour in Cincinnati, LePage thought a casual touch was needed. So, invitations went out in kidney-shaped pool form. It was a hit. Guests stayed until 1 a.m. and were treated to two buffets decked out with a 40-pound hip of beef being carved by chefs in tall white hats and full regalia.

"Elegance," she says, "doesn't take a lot of money but some imagination to make something look different."

But before the festivities and the business began, LePage went through a painful period. Her husband — a successful businessman — died. She had been his close associate and administrative assistant. She then sat on the board of company directors, but the company was winding down.

"That part of my life was over," she said. "So, I had to start somewhere."

Not wanting to be a secretary again, and told she was overqualified as an administrative assistant, LePage says she then realized that for both of her married lives she had been arranging business functions and house parties and that she loved to entertain.

With the encouragement of friends and associates, she started L'arranger. "If you can make money doing what you enjoy doing, then, that's the best business you can be

in," she said.

The jigsaw puzzle came together, she said. "But I scare myself just thinking about what I've done. Having been in a cocoon and protected, and then to go out in the cold, cruel world... But seeing what other women were really doing out there, I got right into it."

LePage, first vice-president of the



**Business
Woman**

Business and Professional Women's Club of Mississauga and an active member of the Board of Trade, now sees her business expanding to include larger business functions, replete with company colors and cakes with company logos. She has a hand in arranging try-it-again weddings, and is also considering the franchise option.

"Even if the business doesn't work out — but it will — it will have been satisfying in terms of personal growth, professional association and the thrill of business," LePage says.



PAT LePAGE