



RAISE THE BAR

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bruce kennedy

BARSON WHEELS

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MEET THE PRO >> Beverage catering service Bars on Wheels supplies the liquor, the labor, even the bar itself for weddings, corporate bashes, and private parties. When creating bar setups, owner Bruce Kennedy always keeps the guests in mind. "I always try to get a sense of the type of event it is," says Kennedy. "Is it construction boys or ladies from Montgomery?"

SKILL SET >> Kennedy started bartending as a student at Morehead State University. In Cincinnati, he worked at Barleycorn's and the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza bar before starting Bars on Wheels

in 1989. "A good bartender is someone with good people skills," says Kennedy, whose roster of fellow bartenders has included male models, soccer moms, and a Key Bank executive.

PERSONAL TOUCH >> In addition to making his own Bloody Mary mix, Kennedy likes to surprise clients with specialty drinks like Keoki Coffee, a concoction of Kahlua, brandy, and hot coffee garnished with whipped cream and shaved chocolate. Whether he's mixing Manhattans or martinis, Kennedy knows the secret to a great cocktail: Don't over-pour. "A good drink isn't necessarily a strong drink," he says.

ABOVE AND BEYOND >> At small functions, Kennedy likes to get out from behind the bar and work the crowd—pouring wine, replacing beers, and freshening mixed drinks. If the hosts have a buffet, he makes sure platters stay filled, and he'll even brew and serve coffee at the end of the party. "The night goes slow if you just stand around."

• ALYSSA BRANDT

PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM NOELKER