

Rental MANAGEMENT

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Classic keeps on rolling

Despite an ownership change earlier this year, Classic Party Rentals, El Segundo, Calif., continues to grow, recently acquiring four more party rental stores. In January, the company was sold by Dublin Clark & Co., Greenwich, Conn., to Quad-C Management, Charlottesville, Va., a private equity firm. John Campanelli, Classic's CEO, said new ownership has not changed the fundamentals of the company.

"Classic Party Rentals' strategic growth plan remains unchanged," said Campanelli. "We continue growing organically in each of our markets by providing outstanding service and value, expanding geographically by acquiring the very best rental companies in other growing markets and expanding our capabilities by adding services through our centers of excellence. Additionally, we now have better access to capital so that we can take advantage of each great opportunity that comes our way," he said.

■ On Feb. 8, Classic announced it had acquired Parties a la Carte, the party rental division of Buellton, Calif.-based Valley Tool Rental. Parties a la Carte was founded by Joy and Steve Sawin 16 years ago. Classic plans to relocate Parties a la Carte to a newly-constructed facility in Buellton and the Sawins will work with the company as consultants.

■ On Feb. 15, Classic announced it had acquired Panache — An Event Rental Co., Pompano Beach, Fla. With operations in Pompano Beach and Lakeland, Fla., Panache has served caterers, event and destination planners, hotels and restaurants throughout Florida for the past 14 years, specializing in tabletop rental items and specialty linens. Panache supports more than 15,000 events annually. "When we started looking for a partner to help us grow, Classic quickly became our top choice," said Kelly Murphy, Panache co-founder and president. "We felt we were

already the best rental company in Florida and now we've joined forces with the best rental company in the country."

■ On March 8, Classic announced the acquisition of Napa, Calif.-based La Bella Party Rental Co. Since its inception in 2004, La Bella has been a market leader in Napa and Sonoma, specializing in china, stemware, flatware and linen rentals. Classic will continue to serve the area from La Bella's Napa showroom and warehouse and its St. Helena showroom. Former La Bella owners Betsy and Herb Stone will remain with Classic as business consultants, and Casey Stone will serve as the location's operations manager. Susan Kidwell, general manager of Classic San Francisco, will assume an expanded role, which will include leadership of Napa Valley operations.

■ On March 21, Classic announced it had acquired Ace Party Rentals in Charlotte, N.C. Ace Party Rentals was founded in 1997 and is known as a leading tenting and special event rentals provider in the greater Charlotte area, providing support for high-profile community events such as the Queenscup Steeplechase and the Latin Festival. Christian Eastman, the founder of Ace Party Rentals, will lead the combined company as the general manager.

Campanelli had said as recently as last fall that Classic would likely acquire about three rental businesses per year, but now hints that the number could be higher. "Timing an acquisition is never easy. In 2005, we acquired two rental companies and we added three companies in 2006. In 2007, we've completed four deals to date. We have gained significant experience in this process and we are better at integrating companies now. New additional resources, better funding and the fact that we only acquire other stand-out organizations make these transitions easier." **RM**

— Jim Robinson



**CLASSIC
PARTY
RENTALS**
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