

Palisadian-Post

Serving the Community Since 1928

20 PAGES

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2011 ♦ PACIFIC PALISADES, CALIFORNIA

75¢

Tips for Hosting the Perfect Holiday Party

BY JULIE PRYOR

Special to the Palisadian-Post

The holidays are just around the corner and many of you will be entertaining at home. As the owner of Pryor Events, I have planned corporate and social events, as well as weddings, for 16 years, and have gained some valuable home-entertaining tips. I hope you find them useful.

- First, send your neighbors a note with your party details. Let them know what time the party will end. Ask them to call you if they have a problem. It's nice to invite your neighbors to the party, or at least ask them to stop by for a drink. If you have a neighbor who has complained in the past, you may even consider offering to pay for a nice hotel for him or her for the evening.
- Alert your caterer to any known allergies your guests may have. Make sure to have vegetarian and gluten-free options available.
- Review your home's curb appeal a week or two before your party. If your door needs repainting, or your garden is looking drab, make the changes a few days before the party. I will never forget the client who decided to have her front door painted the day of her party.
- If your party will be held outdoors during the day, shield your guests from the sun. In the evening, make sure you have plenty of heaters if you are not tenting the area. There is nothing worse than sitting at an outside table and freezing.
- Stock bathrooms with hand towels, liquid soap in a holiday scent, extra toilet paper and vases of fragrant flowers.
- Hire a lifeguard for your pool if you are not covering it.
- Have your plumber's number handy.
- Leave your pets with a friend or pet sitter.
- Keep your music at a comfortable level so that guests can talk—especially during dinner.
- In addition to other beverages, serve one festive signature drink in a gorgeous glass. Mixing in cranberry juice or pomegranate juice will add a nice touch of holiday red.
- Make sure your hors d'oeuvres are bite-sized and easy to eat.
- Think comfort food at the holidays: serve shot glasses of creamy tomato soup with mini-grilled cheese bites on top; ceramic spoons filled with piping hot macaroni and cheese; mini pot pies; irresistible brie en croûte; and beef Wellington.
- Bring in one "wow" for the evening—perhaps carolers dressed in period costumes or life-sized toy soldiers greeting guests.
- Ask your valet parking company to refuse tips.
- Place thoughtful favors, along with a note thanking guests for attending, on each guest's car dashboard.
- On a chilly evening, place a heater in the area where guests will wait for their cars. Serve hot chocolate or spiced apple cider from a nearby cart.



Julie Pryor of Pryor Events

- If anyone drinks too much, call for a cab and send the person home safely.
- Enjoy the evening. Your guests will follow your lead.

For information about Julie Pryor's services, visit pryorevents.com. Pryor Events has been featured in InStyle, People magazine, Real Simple, Town & Country and other national publications.