

How to throw THE PERFECT PARTY

From decor to ambience and music, follow these insider tips to give your guests an evening to remember

It's not always easy to gather family and friends to special occasions or soirée, sometimes it can even be downright stressful but with professional help such as Leticia Hsu and Eileen Lui who are professional wedding planners, they ensure all your party planning woes are covered. From decor to ambience and music to food, these party planners have thought it through.

Read on as they share their top 10 tips to help you throw a phenomenal party:

1 It's All About The Guests

"It depends on the purpose of the party, if it's to thank certain people, naturally you need to invite the people you want to thank. If it's a bachelorette party, it can be your girlfriends, your close co-workers and depending on what the activities are, sometimes brides include their close family members."

2 Plan Ahead

"For a local destination, planning can be done one to two months ahead of time, but if you are flying off to an exotic location it's best to plan at least six months ahead of time, so that guests can take their necessary leave. Having said that, if all you're looking for is a simple chill out session, it can be thrown together in three weeks!"

3 Decide On A Theme

"Having a theme is nice especially in our Instagram age, but not crucial. You don't have to colour coordinate to have fun! A theme can be as simple as a colour palette or as adventurous as a costume party, so it depends on the type of guests you are inviting (whether



Your theme can be based on the location where the party is. For example, a floral theme for an outdoor get together.



Block candles and succulents in jars make for a great DIY centrepiece.



Create a cosy ambience for family and friends with the right lighting.

SETTING THE MOOD...

We asked party and event organisers for easy tips to create the right ambience.

HOME FRAGRANCE

"When guests enter the room, they should be delighted with a nice scent," Anna Lim, Creative Director of Spellbound Group says. She recommends a diffuser with a soft fragrance like lavender or a mix of spring scents such as citrus or gardenia.

CLEAN DECOR

Keep the decor uncluttered, says Ekta Hathiramani, Event Organiser from Panache Events. "Sometimes, a simple flower arrangement and block candles are enough to create a beautiful setting and party ambience. Also, keep the entryway clear as this is where you'll be greeting guests as they walk in."

CONSISTENCY

"Pick a theme or colour concept and stick to it so as to keep the decor consistent for your party," Ekta says.

they will actually dress up), the purpose of the party (if it's to thank guests, by the end of the wedding you would normally just want a relaxing evening) and budget.

"Think outside the box when it comes to matching your décor and stationeries to the theme, it can have elements of the theme but you don't have to overdo it. Try to keep everything within the colour palette."

4 Get The Light Right

"Lighting is crucial to create the mood, so think about candles if you are going for a cosy atmosphere.

"If you're on a budget, focus on key areas. You will find that guests will be attracted by the highlighted areas and won't realise that everywhere else is subdued.

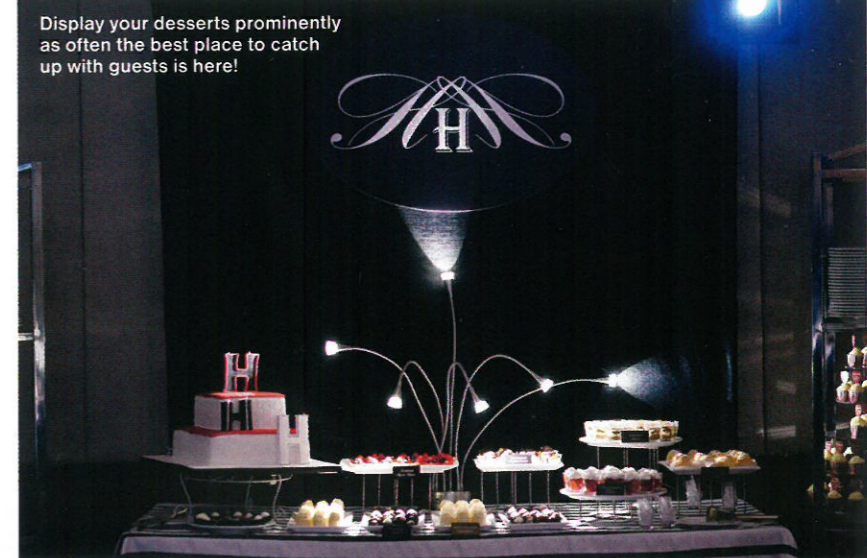
"Scents are the best trigger of memories so if you want your guests to remember what a good time they had, pick a signature scent and have it wafting through the air."

5 Focus On The Menu

"Try to mix it up a bit, think about having D-I-Y food stations rather than a sit down meal. These D-I-Y food stations mean guests can go there and create their own taco or burger, create a killer cocktail or a smooth mocktail. If you would rather be served, find out how the chef can incorporate the theme into the presentation of the meal or have ingredients that represent your theme."

6 Decide On Entertainment

"Entertainment is good food, great ambience and awesome company. So if you are planning a party where you want to catch up with friends you may want to give room for conversation and



Display your desserts prominently as often the best place to catch up with guests is here!

have the party more fluid. If you don't know half the guests and would rather just let them see a show, then keep them entertained with shows and music.

"Music is a must no matter what kind of party you are throwing, but you can get away with an iPod. Of course if budget is not an issue, live entertainment is always nicer to have.

"Photo booths are more of a want rather than a need with everyone having a smartphone, so you are bound to have plenty of photos but if you can instantly take home funny photos of yourself, it can be quite awesome!"

8 Fix A Dress Code

"If you have a theme to your party, it might be a good idea to fix a dress code. You might also want to let the guests know in advanced on a dress code because you don't want someone to come in a tux for your beach party and feel oddly out of place, right? As a guest myself, I always prefer to know the dress code because I wouldn't want the tendency to be the strange one standing out."

9 Small Details Make A Deep Impression

Sending out personalised and formal dinner invitations, printing your guests' names on place cards and providing a door gift of baked goodies are just some ways to make your guests feel special.

10 Relax Before The Party

Planning can really take the wind out of you, so try to take some downtime just before the big day to relax. It's important that you don't get too caught up in the preparation and burn out during the party. **W**



Cool cakes and pretty desserts is a must!



A groovy 60s themed costume party.



Cute snack booths for guests to pick from.



Good music helps to liven up a party.



Fun balloon twisting activities to keep the kids entertained.



Keep to the party theme even with your goodie bags!



A giant Snake & Ladder board game for some outdoor fun.

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Your Party-Planning Checklist
To keep things in check, follow this easy guide by Leticia and Eileen, for a successful do:



- 3 WEEKS BEFORE**
 - Make a guest list
 - Decide on a theme, if you want one
 - Send out invitations
 - Plan the venue & menu
 - Bring in the help
 - Decorate
 - Check medicine cabinets and restock
 - Setup clean up areas
 - Last minute shopping
- 2 WEEKS BEFORE**
 - Clean/ buy plates, cutlery and decoration
 - Come up with a playlist
 - Buy décor / food or activities
- 1 WEEK BEFORE**
 - Clean the house (if it's at home)
 - Start your DIY projects
 - Stock the bar
- 3 DAYS BEFORE**
 - Notify the neighbours
- 1 DAY BEFORE**
 - Set the tables
 - Finish as much cooking as you can
 - Setup as much as you can
- DAY OF**
 - Last minute cooking
 - Display food
 - Start the music
 - Make yourself look presentable
 - Greet guests
 - Have fun!

TURN UP THE MUSIC
Music sets the tone and fills the air with pleasant vibes.

THINK ABOUT YOUR GUESTS
Who will be attending? What is the demographic makeup? The idea is to play a good assortment of music so that all of your guests feel represented.

ONLINE IS A GOOD RESOURCE
If you're racking your brain trying to come up with the right beat for a grand entrance, look online or on Spotify for potential playlists.

PUT TOGETHER A LIST OF MUST HAVES
Let your DJ know a dozen of your favourite songs that you want to hear played. And they don't necessarily need to be dance songs; but rather ones that would go well with dinner or a cocktail hour set.

Leticia Hsu and Eileen Lui are Malaysian wedding planners. Leticia is currently the president while Eileen is the vice-president of the Association of Wedding Professionals in Malaysia. They are the authors of The Malaysian Wedding Handbook which is now available at RM35.90 per copy at all major bookstores in Malaysia and Singapore.