

How to Throw the Ultimate Holiday Party

Written by Nadine Toren

[Television personality](#) and AZfoothills.com columnist [Nadine Toren](#) is scouring the area, finding savvy Valley features, bringing readers “on the scene.” Every day she’ll introduce you to [celebrities](#), [athletes](#), and give you an inside look into local events and hot spots. She’ll touch on topical issues, and keep AZ fans posted on all the big talkers [around town](#).



Get on Santa's good list by planning the best Christmas bash! Check out the keys to hosting a fab and festive party this season.

It's time. Your holiday party is around the corner, and you really want to make things perfect, right? Well, if you're aiming for the ultimate Christmas soiree, we have some must-try tips, courtesy of two lovely Valley ladies.

Thanks to Kelly Ehlers, owner of Evoke Brand Strategies, and Lauren Smith, Agency 210 event-planner, your December celebration just got better. For starters, they say you'll want to kick things off with a kick-ass invitation, and for that, ditch paper and stamps for something digital. Yes, by going paperless, you'll save green while going green. The gals suggest creating a customized invitation through Paperless Post (www.paperlesspost.com) because the savvy site gives you the control you'd have with handmade invitations; however, it easily allows you to distribute your invites via social networks like Facebook. You can also download the RedStamp App (www.redstamp.com/app), a free way to send notes on-the-go. (Think of it as a digital post-it.) This app is ideal for a last-minute party or an immediate thank you message.

And once your invites hit the digital mailbox, you'll want to hammer down a soiree theme, and for 2011, Ehlers and Smith say D-I-Y! Yep, the do-it-yourself style is totally in, so skip on the lavish, pricey décor. Consider incorporating family heirlooms and treasures; go back to the basics. For a delightful touch, simmer a dash of mulling spices and cinnamon sticks in a pot of water to instantly set the mood—that will give your AZ household the smell of the season.

As for food, get a truck. Let me explain. Yes, you can still ask your guest to bring a dish, but if you want something different, opt for a food truck. This somewhat-affordable mobile vendor is totally chic and unique—these guys are the gurus of on-the-go eating. According to the Phoenix Street Food organization, there are still trucks for hire this season...but you need to book fast. Some ideas: Duck Duck Pig, Pizza Daux, and the Super Farm Super Truck.

And of course, you'll need something to wash down the nosh; so for sippers, skip pricey top shelf cocktails; instead, select limited options infused with flair. Ehlers and Smith suggest offering 1-2 beers from an AZ brewery, like San Tan or Four Peaks. You can also serve a choice of white or red vino; Ehlers and Smith give Arizona Stronghold (www.azstronghold.com) two thumbs up. Finally, create one signature cocktail—something classic and festive. (You might want to try Reagan's Orange Bitters, garnished with a cinnamon stick and cherry.)

Finally, capture the candid memories by using fun applications like PhotoBooth (<http://www.apple.com/ipad/built-in-apps/photobooth.html>) and Camera+ (<http://campl.us/>). Both services offer creative twists to pictures, and aid in taking pics from your smart phone. (Plus, they're simple to share on Facebook.)

For more hot tips, check out www.evokebrands.com and www.agency210.com.



www.facebook.com/onthescenewithnadine

How to Throw the Ultimate Holiday Party

Written by Nadine Toren
