

Sand and Sushi in Scottsdale

Written by Written by Susie Tyler-Alofs

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Is there really beachfront property in the Valley? There is in this Scottsdale backyard.



Invite

This fun Japanese-style invite matched the party's color scheme and had sandpaper to represent the beach. A couple of disposable chopsticks were glued on as a finishing touch.

Activities

Parking stress was alleviated with valet service, but here's the kicker: Party-goers handed over their keys as well as their shoes. This ensured they were party-ready and barefoot for the unexpected and fun surprise of the backyard beach. (Sand and stilettos just don't mix.) During the party, "Red Solo Cup" by Toby Keith was played every 30 to 45 minutes and servers simultaneously passed the red Solo Jell-O shots. After a couple rounds, the guests began to sing along to the song.



Décor

It all starts with 48 tons of sand. Mix in a little Japanese style and culture and you have a night of unexpected fun for all your guests. We began with a Japanese-inspired color palette of red, orange and green then added the beachy details—including sand. First, start with a tarp from your local home improvement store to spread the sand on. Then, local business Pioneer Sand and Gravel Company brings the sand right to your door. It's that simple. For more beach-inspired accents, we thought outside the cup—red Solo cups, to be exact. They can become a wine glass, a light fixture and a shot glass. To transform the cup into a wine glass, glue a candlestick holder (found at any local dollar store) to the bottom of it. Smaller, two-ounce red Solo cups were used for Jell-O shots. While the drinks were flowing, guests admired illuminated Japanese paper lanterns adorned with red Solos. Just glue a cup upside down to the lamp's surface and hang.



Floral

Choose fruit to match your color palette, and slice and stuff them into a clear vase. Add flowers from your local grocery store for a budget-friendly professional-looking centerpiece. Hang the same flowers upside down using fishing line from light fixtures or chandeliers.

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Food & Drinks

Total Wine directed us to some interesting, budget-appropriate but lesser known wines. This was the perfect strategy to provide a wine-tasting experience for our guests using, of course, our homemade wine glasses. Guests enjoyed eats from a sushi bar that we called The Sushi Shack. (Raymond Chu, the sushi chef, brought everything except for the banquet tables, chairs and linens, which are easy rental items.) For even more tastiness, we added The Burger Shack. There was also The Love Shack (bed display) and The Smoke Shack (for cigar smokers). For dessert, theme-friendly cookies, in the shapes of lobsters, crabs and fish, were provided by Tammie Coe Cakes.



PARTY PROS

Catering: Chef Daniel Lagarde, www.lagardeculinarysolutions.com.

Cookies: Tammie Coe Cakes, www.tammiecoecakes.com.

Invite/Favor Tag: The Paper Place, 480.941.2858.

Photographer: Erica Velasco, www.ericavelasco.com.

Sand: Pioneer Sand and Gravel Company, www.pioneersand.com.

Sushi Bar: Sushi chef Raymond Chu, 602.741.0110.

Wine Bar: Total Wine, Scottsdale, www.totalwine.com.