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THE MALL AT MILLENIA MAGAZINE

## ULTIMATE ORLANDO

HOLIDAY 2010



# 10 Tips for Entertaining

It takes more than cheese balls and mistletoe to make a festive holiday party. To throw an unforgettable bash, check out these tips for holiday entertaining at home. —By Pam Brandon

**1** The perfect party starts with the invitation. Use it to give a visual of the party, and make it fun. If you send an engraved invitation addressed in gold, expect friends to show up in cocktail attire. Be sure to send invitations at least four weeks in advance, as calendars fill up fast during the holiday season.

**2** Be ready at least 15 minutes before the designated start time, or have someone at the door to welcome your guests. Offer a signature cocktail as they arrive, and get conversation started by using framed photos of your attendees as table décor.

**3** Serve food that's easy to eat and that stays delicious on a buffet — no risottos, no messy spaghetti, no chocolate fountains. Test every dish ahead of time to avoid disasters.

**4** Signature glassware offers an extra aesthetic touch for cocktails, and it's fun to mix and match. Be sure to have plenty of flatware, and just say no to disposables. **Crate & Barrel** is a one-stop shop for festive, fun, reasonably priced holiday tableware.

**5** If dinner is later, have nibbles as guests come in. People congregate around food, so place light supper fare in rooms throughout the house, and use beautiful serving pieces, such as the elegant new Juliska cheese plate, from **Bloomingdale's**.

**6** Unless you want a dance party, keep music low enough for good conversation. **Sony Style's** ALTUS Wireless Multi-Room Audio will help you create just the right musical vibe from room to room.

**7** Be sure your yard is in tip-top shape, as Central Florida parties tend to spill outdoors, weather permitting. An outdoor fire pit is a wonderful gathering place for conversation. Lighting is important; tiki torches are an inexpensive way to illuminate walkways and patios.

**8** Bring the wow factor. Extra details like over-the-top tabletop décor, decadent mini-desserts, a designer cocktail, or a swimming pool full of **Yankee Candles'** floating glass tea lights will leave an impression that keeps guests talking the next day.

**9** If you're inviting children, have an activity to keep them entertained. If it's a craft project, hire an adult so you don't have to oversee. Games for grown-ups? Only if there are fewer than 10 guests. Try **Urban Outfitters'** "Glee" DVD game.

**10** Give your guests a parting gift, such as peppermint bark from **Williams-Sonoma**, available only during the holidays.

Source: Heidi Brice, senior event planner, Puff 'n Stuff Catering

## PEN-ULTIMATE

Looking for the ultimate gift or just a fancy way to address your holiday party invitations?



**STROKE A LINE** with one of **Montblanc's** scented inks in cinnamon, forest and other whiffs of winter (1). Try the company's new hand-crafted Meisterstück Diamond (2) with a patent-cut diamond on top (from \$595).



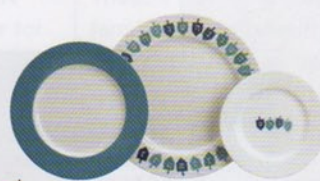
If you're watching your budget, **Things Remembered** features elegant but affordable pens starting at around \$20 from Cross (3), Marquis by Waterford (4), and its own line, Reflections (5). In silver and gun metal, the pens can be engraved for a special someone.

Tea light holder, \$2.99, at Yankee Candle



Juliska cheese board and knife china gift set, \$98, available at Bloomingdale's

Peppermint Bark, \$26.50, at Williams-Sonoma



Dreidel Salad Plate \$6.95, Teal Rim Dinner Plate \$8.95, Dreidel Platter, \$19.95, all at Crate & Barrel

"Glee" DVD game, \$28, Urban Outfitters

