

Venues Tips

The perfect location will go a long way to making your event a big success. It enhances the ambiance that makes it memorable. A lot of thought is needed to finding that unique setting. If it is the right location, it will stand out on its own or by decorating it you can create what you desire.

Selecting the perfect location depends upon the size, logistics, image, number of guests and budget. There is no end to the list where you can hold events: hotels, restaurants, night clubs, wineries, historic houses, vacant mansions, warehouses, parks, museums, women's clubs, an automobile showroom, any public or private facility. Use your imagination and be open to the many possibilities and how they can work for you.

The site size needs to accommodate the number of guests expected. If too large, your guests will feel lost. However, with decorations and props, you can scale down an area to create a cozy ambience. If the site is too small, people will feel cramped and it will not work.

When looking at the event sites, keep in mind the following:

What type of ambiance do you want to create?

What is the purpose, formality, theme and the image you wish to convey?

Will it be indoor or outdoor?

If outdoors, is there an indoor room available if it should rain?

Who are the guests and how many do you anticipate?

Is it clean?

What type of food and beverage will you serve?

Will music be provided for dancing?

Will there be other entertainment?

What is the traffic flow to the bar, for the food, etc.?

Is the location easy to get to and from?

Are there any special transportation issues?

What are the parking facilities?

Is it close to public transportation? Does it need to be?

Is it safe? Do you need security in the buildings and/or parking lot?

With these factors and a clear idea of your budget, it will keep you focused while looking for a site.

When using a hotel, restaurant or other public facility that is open to the public, read our section Atmosphere Sets the Mood for additional questions to ask when viewing these sites.

After you have determined the type of facility and location, ask friends and other special event professional for recommendations. You can check resource guides, yellow pages, magazines and the Internet for additional information.

Once you have narrowed down the possibilities, inquire if the site is available on your chosen date. You may have to have an alternative date in mind in order to secure the site of your choice.

Ask what are the facility's rules and regulations pertaining to all aspects of your event (food, beverages, decorations, entertainment). Be sure it will accommodate the event, the number of guests, and ask if you can bring in decorations, your own caterer, equipment and entertainment. Know what the policies are regarding smoking, liquor, insurance and security. Ask if you need any permits and who provides them. Also, confirm the hours of operation.

It helps to visit a site when it is setup for an event to see how it accommodates a party. Also look at photos of previous events and check recommendations.

If the site is outdoors, have a contingency plan should the weather not cooperate. Know your move-in and-out times. If timing is an issue, ask if another event is before or after you.

To book the facility, sign a contract and leave a deposit. A signed contract is imperative in holding the site. Inquire about their restrictions and cancellation policies. Ascertain whether or not the deposit is refundable and the time-frame for a refund.

When properly planned, your event will be a celebration of which you will be proud. Let the atmosphere of the facility set the mood for your special event!

Room-to-people proportions recommended:

Setup Sq. ft. per person
Theatre/Auditorium 9-10
Stand-up Buffets 8-10
Receptions 8-10
Sitting Banquets 10-14
Classroom 15-16
If Dancing, add 2

Table Sizes/Accommodations:

Table Size People
Rectangle 5' X 36" 6-8
Rectangle 6' X 36" 8-10
Rectangle 8' X 36" 10-12
Round 42" 4
Round 48" 6
Round 54" 8
Round 60" 10
Round 72" 12

Parking Considerations:

Half as many spaces as people
Valet Parking - 1 valet per 25 cars