

happen because love doesn't come with instructions

Tuesday, August 15, 2006

HOME FEEDBACK ARCHIVES ABOUT MATCH.COM

QUICK POLL



After you've broken up with someone you've been seeing for awhile, you:

- Tend to avoid any place where you might bump into your ex
- Don't change your routine at all

VOTE

Get mingling inside when it's cold outside: We've got a simple plan that includes drink recipes, décor tips, and more.

By Celeste Perron

'Tis the season when people bundle up, stay home, and max out their Netflix subscriptions...that's exactly why it's *also* the perfect time to throw a party. People usually don't have a whole lot going on post-holidays, so you're guaranteed an enthusiastic turnout. Plus if you're single, playing host is a great opportunity to connect with potential love interests. Here's how to pull off a gathering with maximum style and minimum stress—and flirt your way into snagging a few phone numbers!

Shake up your guest list

In addition to your usual amigos, you'll want to lure some intriguing new people into your festivities. Start by asking every member of your inner circle to bring along an unattached friend or two so that you (and all the other singles in attendance) will have some new options to scope out. Then extend invites to any casual acquaintances you've been hoping to get to know better, whether that's someone from work, your spinning class, or even that hottie you bump into every morning at your local coffee shop. Don't be shy—everyone loves to receive a party invite. To up the odds that the objects of your affection will attend, send them a quick, casual follow-up e-mail saying "Hey, hope you can stop by on Saturday!" This conveys you're actually hoping to see *them*, and didn't just blast an invite to every single person you've ever met.

Keep your bar basic...

Of course, it's crucial to keep those social lubricants flowing, but you don't want to spend

Browse singles in your area.

I am a

Woman

seeking

Men

between

25

and 45

Located in (city/zip)

SEARCH

match.com

.....

What's great about playing host is you have the perfect excuse to act extra-friendly.

.....



all night filling glasses and/or rattling a martini shaker. Instead, set up a self-service bar (either on your kitchen table or by throwing a tablecloth over a side table in your living room), and “keep it simple by only serving two kinds of alcohol,” advises New York City pro party planner Marcey Brownstein, owner of Marcey Brownstein Catering and Events. Limit your selection to, say, wine and vodka (two of the most popular) along with mixers (cola, ginger ale and seltzer), ice and glasses (but stay away from martini glasses—too wobbly, says Brownstein; use wine glasses instead). If you don’t have a proper ice bucket, don’t worry—a big bowl and a serving spoon or two can actually work better. To give wine drinkers more options, add a bottle of Crème de Cassis so people can make Kirs (add a 1/4 oz of Cassis to a glass of white wine), and don’t forget the teetotalers and designated drivers—combine three parts lemonade with one part seltzer in a pitcher and throw in a handful of chopped mint to give them something fun to sip.

...But add pizzazz with one signature cocktail

Jazz things up with a specialty drink, which you can make in advance and serve in pitchers. Everybody loves a white Cosmopolitan, which taste just like the pink ones but their translucent color won’t turn off the men or stain your rug. Here’s how: Mix together 40 oz white cranberry juice, 16 oz citrus-flavored vodka, 4 oz fresh lime juice and 2 oz orange liqueur (like Cointreau, Grand Mariner or Triple Sec). If you don’t have liqueur, you can substitute 4 tsp superfine sugar. Guests can either pour it over ice or shake it with ice in a cocktail shaker and strain. Garnish with a slice of lime. Makes 12 drinks.

Offer food that’s easy to make

As with the drinks, you want to give your guests plenty to eat without slaving away in the kitchen and missing the fun. So keep it simple by limiting your edible offerings to things that can be served cold or at room temperature, says Brownstein (if you have to fire up the oven or stove during the party, you risk breaking into a sweat, which would sap your party mojo). A cheese board, selection of crudités, and roasted, salted mixed nuts are all crowd-pleasing eats you can prepare in advance.

The secret to assembling a simple spread that feels sophisticated: Pay attention to appetizer aesthetics. A cheese board will look most appealing if you use a mix of colors

..... and textures (say, an orange aged cheddar, crumbly blue-veined cheese and creamy, buttery brie, with bunches of red grapes scattered between them).
 Want to shake up your guest list? Ask members of your inner circle to bring along an unattached friend or two.
 Crudités are more elegant if you limit the varieties of veggies—try just cauliflower florets, parboiled asparagus spears and radishes—rather than using a rainbow assortment of bell peppers and baby carrots. Short on pretty bowls and trays to serve your apps on? Check out www.pearlriver.com for inexpensive options.

Don’t go crazy with decorating

All you really need to do to get your place party ready is clean it up, dim the lights, and scatter some votive candles around for ambience—your guests are coming to check out each other, not your décor. If you feel the need to add something extra, place a simple flower arrangement on the bar. Brownstein suggests you use flowers that are monochromatic and appropriate to the season, such as a bunch of white roses or deep crimson dahlias, or, as an alternative to flowers, fill a vase with tall boughs of eucalyptus or sage, both of which give off a wintry aroma.

Pick a party-perfect soundtrack

To set the right vibe, background tunes should be groovy but not distracting—the point of



an at-home gathering is to mingle and flirt, not shout over pounding house music. Patrick Belton, DJ and owner of LA's 123 DJs, suggests Brazilian and Cuban tunes (such as *Bebel Gilberto Remixed*, a new CD of songs by the sultry Brazilian chanteuse that have been reworked by electronica producers) and "sexy, lounge-y Euro" music like Thievery Corporation's *Outernational Sound*, St. Germain's *Tourist* and the latest compilation CDs from Paris hot spots Buddha Bar and Hotel Costes.

Cut down on interruptions

To free up even more time for socializing, try to make your guests as self-sufficient as possible. Buy an extra wine opener and keep one near the fridge, so you or your guests can open bottles of white. And put everything that doesn't need to be chilled out on the bar table from the very beginning, so you don't need to fetch more mixers from the kitchen as they run out.

Advance your personal agenda

What's great about playing host is you have the perfect excuse to act extra-friendly. So once you've homed in on your target, make sure his or her glass is full at all times. Also be sure to let the object of your interest know that you're not *just* being polite. Make direct eye contact and say, "I'm so happy you were able to make it tonight so we could get to know each other better" or, even more directly, "We should get together again soon to finish our conversation, in a place with less distractions."

Send a flirty follow-up afterwards

If that guest you're interested in is the bashful sort, all is not lost even after the party is over. If they don't reach out to you first, send them a "thank you for coming to my party" e-mail to get things started and let things unfold from there. If all goes well, the fact that you've pulled off such a fun affair should act as a bit of an aphrodisiac...

Celeste Perron is the author of Playing House: A Starter Guide to Being a Grown Up.

Related Articles

- [Trend Alert: "Date My Friend" Parties](#)
- [Cook Up A Great Dinner Date](#)
- [10 Things Every Single Girl Must Own](#)
- [10 Things Every Single Man Must Own](#)

[EMAIL ARTICLE](#)[PRINT](#)[SEND FEEDBACK](#)[SUBSCRIBE TO MATCH.COM](#)

[About Match.com](#) | [Your Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)
[Contact Us](#) | [Advertise with Us](#) | [Become an Affiliate](#)
Copyright 2006 Match.com, LP. d1w147t151a203

partner sites: [HSN](#) [Citysearch](#) [Evite](#) [Expedia](#) [Hotels](#) [Ticketmaster](#) [ReserveAmerica](#) [Hotwire](#) [LendingTree](#) [RealEstate](#) [Gifts.com](#)
[Entertainment](#) [TripAdvisor](#) [CondoSaver](#) [TravelNow](#) [ClassicVacations](#) [LiveDaily](#) [Udate](#) [New Personals Site: Chemistry.com](#)