

MPI Newsletter
Author: Gloria Nelson
RSVP Events, Inc.

HOLIDAY SCAPING: What's Hot and What's Not

Classic, eclectic to avante gard, anything goes for the holidays so long as the look is cohesive from start to finish. Minimalist looks to *over the top*, usually set by the client's investment allocation, can take your event right to "wow"!

Concepts and specific *looks* are almost as limitless as the constellations. Essential components, however, should never be overlooked. Linens, centerpieces and main focal points of entry and the main stage are basic elements of design.

Monochromatic themes of ivory on ivory can be dramatic for the holidays when washing over tables, buffets, centerpieces of ivory poinsettias with holiday greens, chair covers, sash ties, flocked trees, and swagged fabric over stage backdrops and entries. How about adding a myriad of little white Italian Christmas lights to the stage turning it into a wonderland? Lighted ficus trees and hedges create a look of child-like wonder. An orchestra with curved color-coordinated music stands not only sounds good, but looks even better. Toss in a vintage Kris Kringle donning a winter white Santa suit and some of his helpers to interact with your guests and a winter-wonderland of days gone by has just been created.

Northwood's themes with cabin facades, little brown bears, sparse twiggy pines in proliferation and characters dressed with Cromer hats and heavy doses of traditional reds and greens are right in keeping with all that we see in retail stores. In the midst of the setting, make sure to utilize the appropriate lightscaping to uplift the cabin, using cans on trees. Turn down the lights and watch what happens to the room. A moose or two in 3-D and a few deer friends peeking out from a wooded nettle is just the right whimsical touch. Animated 3-D animals are ever better! Don't forget about soundscaping options either. Looped soundtracks of outdoor sounds can be infused into your event. An authentic moose call hidden in close proximity with a speaker will bring a few squeals from delighted revelers as well.

Basic linens are available in traditional reds and greens, but don't forget about jewel tone stripes of garnet, emerald and gold, MacBride Plaid and rich velvets. Gold and Platinum tone satin lamours are always in high demand in major metropolitan markets. Tint the leaves of your floral centerpieces with gold or silver to pull in the fabric stitching and watch what happens when you swag the buffets and guest tables and pin on gold or silver tassels and tie them in with creative napkin tassels. Candles integrated into the high parts of the centerpiece elements, as well as votives at the base, bring warmth that is sure to melt any arctic blast outside. Make sure your votive containers are fire marshall compliant and use the protective clear acrylic flame toppers to keep within code.

Crushed velvet linens lend themselves beautifully to a traditional Renaissance theme. Add period costumed madrigal singers flanking the castle entryway and complete it

all with a drawbridge, suits of armor, twinkling lighted trees and castle flags welcoming your *lords and ladies*. A main stage, set as the interior of a castle, that has faux windows backlit to give that feel of illumination within the castle walls transcends guests to another place and time. Think out of the box with entertainment. There is ample regional entertainment available that can perform right in your dining room including the king and queen, ladies in waiting, wenches, knights in armor, a wizard and a beggar for starters. Comedic jugglers can perform 60 minutes worth of hilarious entertainment, all spoken in medieval dialect.

Themes help to set the pace, but what really sets the design elements apart are things like lighted centerpieces or artificial snow machines that drop biodegradable snow onto your entrance, stage, digital photo station or in showcased corners. Pinpoint lighting directly above centerpieces, and even fog machines create drama with an ethereal effect that hangs in the air 12” above the stage flooring, setting an entirely different mood and feel within the entire room.

Pyrotechnics are oft overlooked. Think of the surprise fireworks add over the Madderhorn Mountain making your celebration of bringing in the New Year simply spectacular within the Swiss Village you’ve created! A gerb here and there, sending out sprays of sparkling light, are sure to delight at the stroke of midnight.

In a more avante gard setting, the use of special effects is essential with neon-tubed lighting in centerpieces, woven into interactive entertainer’s costumes and streamer and confetti guns synchronized for maximum effect at the appropriate second...these are some of the elements that bring excitement to the table, literally! And speaking of tables, don’t forget those fun, funky stretch covers for tables and chairs in all sorts of designs.

The use of natural and live vegetation shouldn’t be overlooked as well. Topiaries made from berries, fresh fruits, moss and greens with cascading vine from the base onto the tables are breathtaking. Fresh fruit, such as pears, apples and oranges are also resplendent to use in vases nestled in a base of greens with a tiny dot of food coloring. But don’t forget lots of votives to warm the colors and add that touch of elegance to your tablescape.

Special events can also be enhanced with illustrated stationary. Can you imagine receiving a save the date card that has the *look* of your event as a teaser? What about putting laundry detergent flakes inside your invitation that immediately get the recipient in the mood to complete their RSVP with a resounding “yes” as snow falls out of their invite? The little touches of table seating arrangement cards, name tags and menu cards, all including the same graphic illustrations, really let your guests know that you’ve thought of every detail in making their evening special **and** unforgettable.

Let your imagination run wild; let your child come out and play as you design unforgettable and enchanting events that will not soon be forgotten.