HOSTING TIPS:
BRYAN RAFANELLI, HUFFINGTON POST OASIS DESIGNER, REVEALS THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF THROWING A GREAT PARTY

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Since the Republican And Democratic National Conventions are essentially the two biggest parties to be thrown in America this year, we’ve been wondering all about hosting our own soirees (on a smaller scale, of course.) So, we asked event planner Bryan Rafanelli, who designed Chelsea Clinton’s wedding and HuffPost’s Oasis retreat at the National Conventions, to give us some hosting tips. Rafanelli gave us a list of do’s and don’ts for throwing a great party:


1. Time Gives You Choices
DO begin the initial process at least four months in advance. It's never too early to start planning. Event planners, hotels, caterers, entertainers, and other vendors can get booked quickly.

2. Represent You
DON'T lose your personality. Don't like pastels? Avoid them in your color palette. Think about your clothes, your home, what you’re drawn to naturally. You are comfortable with these already, so start here.
3. Create A Mood
DO think about natural lighting. Sunlight for day and candlelight at night give your party a welcoming appearance. Candles are very effective in setting the tone and mood of a party. And everyone looks great in candlelight.

4. Ignite The Senses
DO think "smell." It is an often overlooked sense, but a very powerful one. A planted herb garden or arrangements of fresh peonies are sometimes all it takes to transform the scent of your party.

5. Think About The Experience
DO stay in character by creating seamless transitions between rooms. It can be as easy as a candle in the bathroom and a lantern at the front door. There should be a natural flow between the common areas of your party.

6. Take A Seat
DON'T make guests stand. Present a variety of seating options—close enough for conversation yet separated enough to create "landing areas" for guests to interact and maintain a flow throughout the party.
7. Mess-Free Bites
DON'T get your fingers dirty. Give guests the gift of napkin-free food by creating hors d'oeuvres that can be enjoyed in one bite.

8. Make Introductions
DO be sure to take the time to walk around and greet everyone. Also be sure to introduce everyone to each other. It will make the atmosphere more welcoming and comfortable and will help some people to "break the ice."

9. Accommodate Your Guests
DO make it easy for guests to feel comfortable. Provide them with the necessities -- storage for their bags and coats, coasters for their drinks, cozy seating with their friends.

10. Smile
DO take the time to relax, smile and enjoy your party. You put a lot of effort into providing your guests with a good time. Remember they feed off your mood, so best to be calm, cool and collected and not pre-occupied, rushed, or anxious.