



Lighting effects create a party mood anywhere

Home or away?

Should you book a venue or daringly hold the party in your own house?

By Kati Pauk

HOME

PROS

- More personal than a venue
- You can put your own stamp on your event, choosing your own décor with no restrictions.
- You are not tied to a venue's catering, lighting, décor, style of crockery.
- You can start setting up whenever you want; finish whenever you want.
- Convenient for your guests; fewer worries about parking or travel
- No marked-up venue bar prices; you buy all your own drinks and get a refund on any unopened bottles.
- You can drink and not worry about how to get home from your own party or having to take a taxi.
- No need to carry all the presents home at the end of the evening
- If you are hosting a Friday-night dinner and/or a lunch

on Saturday as well as a party, you pay for only one venue; one lot of furniture; one lot of hire equipment.

- If you are planning a summer event and have a garden, you have outside space which is not always easy to find in London.

CONS

- Substantial upheaval, moving and storing furniture, deliveries from multiple suppliers
- Often more expensive as you have to hire everything — marquee, furniture, oven, fridge, crockery, cutlery, glasses linen, lighting, staff...
- Harder to control your budget, as there are so many variables, whereas at a venue most elements will be provided in situ
- You will have to warn neighbours (or invite them!).
- Activity and disruption for a number of days leading up to the date of the party (for

instance, building a marquee takes a good couple of days)

- Post-event upheaval, taking away the marquee, collection of equipment, putting back furniture, cleaning etc.
- Risk of damage to your house; guests trampling on your lovely new parquet floor; breakages
- Lack of privacy when getting ready on the day, as the house will be teeming with suppliers
- Need to alert the council about additional rubbish after the party
- You may have to hire a generator to provide additional power for the catering. This is often unsightly and disruptive for neighbours.
- You will have to hire portable toilets if you do not want people using yours or if you have insufficient facilities for the number of guests you are inviting.

VENUE

PROS

- So many novel venues to choose from, to suit your own personal requirements
- Your venue may include everything: catering, DJ equipment, lighting, furniture, screens etc. so you do not have to hire anything additional.
- You avoid the upheaval of having the party at home.
- Often easier to control your budget, as a venue will have set prices
- Support and advice from venue staff
- Benefit of the venue's vast experience of hosting private events, so less risk that anything will go wrong.
- Simpler to organise, as you may not have to deal with multiple suppliers
- If you book a venue that is a blank canvas, you can stamp your own personality on it and also have the flexibility of using your own

suppliers, decorating the venue exactly how you want and control your budget by choosing your own caterer.

- No worries about neighbours, noise levels and disruption in your street
- No worry about power supplies, as the venue will have everything necessary
- No hassle during the days leading up to the event or afterwards. You just turn up for your celebration and then leave at the end, with no clearing up or breakages of your personal property.

CONS

- Can be more expensive.
- A venue that looks good may not have the best food or the most experience.
- Parking for your guests may be tricky.
- You may be tied to using the venue's suppliers.
- You may not be able to set up as early as you need to, or you may be charged an additional fee to let in suppliers

early.

- Some venues have restrictions such as a sound limiter, or strict finish times.
- You have less control over your party generally.
- There may be extra fees for lighting and AV equipment.
- If styling a blank-canvas venue, you may have to deal with multiple suppliers (as if you were organising the event at home and with the same disadvantages).
- Outside space is often hard to come by in London and if it rains, you will still need a plan B.
- For a popular venue, you have to book far in advance.
- There is the risk of the venue closing down or changing management.
- Some venues have complicated contracts giving them the right to cancel an event.

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A garden lunch is lovely if the weather co-operates