



Industry & People Features

Top 5 trends for festive events

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While corporate cutbacks and scaled down productions are making planners work harder during the 2016 festive season, belt tightening also means pushing creativity to new levels. In an exclusive **six-part online series** we will showcase the best ideas for catering, entertainment, and styling trends for end-of-year functions, and talk to leading event agencies across Asia to find out what they've got in store for the festive season. To get the party started, here are some top event trends to consider:

Social sharing

Use of digital is becoming more and more expected, according to Sophie Fleming from Quintessentially & Co. in Hong Kong, and it doesn't have to be expensive. This can be anything from "a simple photo booth with social media upload capability to more hi-tech interactivity such as crowd gaming, augmented reality and virtual reality". Use of social media is becoming increasingly popular too. "Think of a creative hashtag for your event and encourage guests to upload photos."

Digital Decor

Another interesting finding, according to Malcolm Hew from **Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort and Spa**, is using digital for decor. “Several events have started to replace the traditional wooden plank stage backdrop with an LED screen—creating a grand ambience and enhancing the entire feel of the event.”

Interactive F&B

“Fun food stations and interactivity for guests such as create your own cocktail or molecular dessert stations are becoming popular,” says Fleming. Similarly, Janhavi Shah, director and event stylist at Hong Kong’s 3 Degrees Events, has done events with “specially commissioned chocolates, artistically designed craft beer bottles, branded lollipops and ice pops, and even soft ice cream from Mr Softie’s ice cream truck.”

Meanwhile, Hew has noticed planners are engaging mixologists complete with their own bar counter as a key highlight for dinner events and parties. “They showcase creative cocktails and mocktails and entertain guests at the same time,” he says.



Molecular dessert at Dinner by Heston, Melbourne

Unique venues

Certain Hong Kong classic venues will always remain popular, and will be the preferred choice for some corporations, says Shah. “There is however, a trend towards unique spaces; private kitchens for smaller team events; more outdoor/rooftop venues providing a natural informality; and covered warehouse spaces delivering what we consider to be a more appropriate site to accommodate larger exclusive events.”

Themes

Themed corporate events are on trend according to Ningxi Tan from **Singapore's Royal Plaza on Scotts**, who says most of the hotel's clients will come in with a theme to dress-up the venue and add more fun to the occasion. "Recently, we have seen themes from a laid-back Hawaiian night to a glamorous Hall of Fame night. The hotel has installed roving ambience lighting to help guests enhance the atmosphere suited to their themes," she says.