

LESSING'S HOSPITALITY GROUP

BRINGING NEW MEANING TO CHRISTMAS IN JULY

BY JACOB PUCK

Deck the halls with boughs of holly, fa la . . .

Stop! Rewind that song, you say! Well, Jennifer Cantin, the director of marketing and development for Lessing's Hospitality Group, the area's premier luxury caterer, says not so fast.

"I get it," Cantin said in a recent interview with *Social Life*. "I love the holidays and all the parties just as much as anyone, so now may seem a little early to focus on December fetes. But as the saying goes, 'The early bird catches the worm.'"

Lessing's, with nearly 130 years of provenance and family ownership, is likely behind any number of the parties that you'll attend this summer throughout Long Island. However, if the experts at Lessing's are beginning to turn the pages of their booking calendars, it's a sure sign that you should be, too!

Why? We caught up with Cantin for the real reason why they don't call it Christmas in July for nothing.

No one really wants to think about the holidays right now, but I imagine Lessing's swings into full gear right after Halloween, right?

Now that's a funny one — try the first week of September! Our clients begin booking their holiday events right after Labor Day, by the end of November, we're already booked solid. Even our web pages are updated with holiday information in September."

What's the first thing party planners should do when considering their holiday party?

Set the date. The two weekends leading up to Christmas are obviously insane, so we always encourage people to consider dates earlier in December. People are full of holiday cheer from Thanksgiving on, so why not make an early impression? If you're looking for the prime dates, though, you should book your catering and choose a venue now!

Other than the date, what else should we get ahead of now?

Guest count. It makes a huge difference when you are booking locations. The more precise you are now, the better you'll be able to plan ahead and know what you're getting into.

What will be hot at parties this year?

Signature cocktails will be at the top of the list. People want to put their twist and personality into their bar menu. It's about the wow factor and leaving a lasting impression on all your guests. A new trend that's emerging at all sorts of parties — corporate and



private — is the love of giving back. It's becoming more common for hosts to request that guests bring a toy or gift that can be donated to those in need. It's not just about the party anymore.

What's a subject that shouldn't be overlooked?

Well, budget for sure. You need to go in with a number and your eyes wide open, and then we can give you options based on that. It could mean the difference between a mediocre sit-down dinner and an unbelievable cocktail party.

What do you love most about the holidays?

I love a great party — and all the decorations!

What drives you absolutely crazy?

Shopping and the lines! People have little patience, and to me that's not what the holidays are about.

So, your word of wisdom is to keep your eye on the prize: a Lessing's hosted party that's been planned out well in advance.

Yes! It's the perfect way to make your holiday season complete!

Lessing's Hospitality Group
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