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When you go to a bar or club on New Year's [Eve](#), you're walking into amateur night. So why not throw the bash yourself? Here's how to do it right, with expert advice from April Masini of [Ask April](#).

Wine comes out of bottles, not boxes. And champagne can be made into some great New Year's [Eve](#) cocktails.

1. Guest List

The key is gender balance. You want to have a good female-to-male ratio, but also the right kind of females. "If the point is to hook up, you don't want to invite a bunch of women looking for serious relationships," notes Masini. "When people go home with someone they want to connect with again, your party didn't suck."

2. Theme

Yes, you need one beyond "New Year's [Eve](#)." "If you're having a cocktail party, let people know so they don't arrive wanting dinner," says Masini. Nothing kills a party faster than unmet expectations. Your theme will help you properly prepare yourself and everyone else.

3. Deep Clean

Hire a housekeeper and have him or her scour the place. It really doesn't cost that much. Make sure there's enough toilet paper and soap to go around. A super clean pad (to begin with) will make people not only more comfortable, but more respectful of your property.

4. Booze

One of the main things separating a grown-up party from a big kid party is quality alcohol. “Instead of Kirkland, get some flashier names like Johnnie Walker, Belvedere and Patrón.” Also, wine comes out of bottles, not boxes. Oh, and champagne can be the active ingredient in some [great New Year's Eve cocktails](#).

5. Help

Masini calls hiring a bartender a “classy move,” and there’s no doubt it’ll take your party to the next level. Bonus: he or she can assume the responsibility cutting off people who’ve had one too many. Just make sure they let you know who needs a cab at the end of the night.

6. Grub

“You don’t have to serve filet mignon,” but you should have something more substantial than bags of chips. Six-foot subs, hot wings, Swedish meatballs and crudité are easy to line up, easy to serve and easy to eat.

7. Bonus Feature

Make sure your party has an added element that holds people’s interest. Maybe you have a slideshow recapping the year that plays throughout the night. Maybe you hire a killer DJ. Maybe you have a contest with prizes awarded around the time the ball drops. Extra details like that will have people sticking around... and coming back next year.



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