

# Party like it is 2006:

## Stay at home or go out, but think creatively

By Emily Soccorsy  
Independent Newspapers

New Year's Eve is arguably the biggest party night of the year. Options for heading out on the town abound (see sidebar).

The problem? After all the holiday fussing, visiting, partying, eating and drinking, you are drained. A small gathering for family and friends sounds like a much more attractive way of bringing in 2006. Or, while you want to go out, you cannot be bothered to handle the decorating and planning of an event for family or friends.

Consider the following if you find yourself in either situation.

### New Year's Eve In

Amy Petrovsky, owner of Sensational Events, a full-service social and corporate event management company, has plenty of recommendations for those who wish to host small or medium groups at their homes for New Year's Eve.

The first issue to resolve? A theme.

Particularly for a small gathering, Ms. Petrovsky recommended planning the theme around the desires of guests.

"If you look at your guests, you should do something that fits the needs of the guests and makes them feel special and included," she said.

In other words, if you are having an extroverted, enthusiastic crowd, consider interactive games. She recommends jotting down descriptions of situations on paper, tossing them into a hat, and then having guests perform a skit based on the description.

If your party guests are more reserved, consider providing unique entertainment.

"Live music is not enough," she cautioned.

Ms. Petrovsky suggested having the evening catered, and hiring a sous chef come in and prepare dishes and talk to guests.



AMY PETROVSKY

"Maybe you have someone come in and teach something," Ms. Petrovsky said, adding a wine-tasting with a sommelier would make for a fun and festive event. She also suggested having an artist come in to work on a piece during the party or do drawings of the evening.

Perhaps you would like to invite couples who might have differing hobbies between them – make plans to accommodate both groups, Ms. Petrovsky mused.

"Maybe you have poker in one room (for the men) and then women scrapbooking in another."

For those who are more charitably minded, Ms. Petrovsky suggested adding a philanthropic element. Have guests bring old board games or books to donate to a local charity, she said.

"It's a simple thing and you are not asking much," she noted. "It's nice for people to get that (opportunity) because to be honest, you are not going to see many holiday invitations with something like that."

Don't miss the chance to bring in the contemplative nature of the end of the year.

"The holidays are a great time for reflection and being thankful, and it's a great time for looking forward," she said.

Incorporate such ruminations by having guests share highlights from the previous year and/or plans or resolutions for the coming year.

Whatever is done, be sure to consider whether or not you would like to offer alcohol to guests. If you do, be prepared with a taxi service at the end of the evening, Ms. Petrovsky cautioned.

"I always have cabs standing by," she said. "That's a priority. No one (who's been drinking) should get behind the wheel."

### New Year's Eve Out

For those who don't want the bother of hosting another festive engagement in their homes, there is another option.

Diane Corieri of Evening Entertainment

### New Year's Eve events

#### Fiesta Bowl Ball presented by Ellie and Michael Ziegler

- 6:30 p.m. Dec. 31 at The Phoenician
- [www.tostitosfiestabowl.com](http://www.tostitosfiestabowl.com)
- Buy tickets by calling (480) 350-0911.
- Single seats are \$350, full tables of 10 are available for \$3,500. Live entertainment.

#### The Phoenix Symphony Black & White Gala

- Dec. 31 at the Westin Kierland Resort & Spa in north Scottsdale
- [www.phoenixsymphony.com](http://www.phoenixsymphony.com), click on Special Events
- Ball features The Phoenix Symphony under the baton of Resident Conductor Robert Moody, featured guests The Manhattan Transfer, and a special performance by Music Director Michael Christie. Optional activities at the resort carrying over onto Jan. 1.

#### Scottsdale's New Year's Eve Champagne & Chefs

- Dec. 31 in Downtown Scottsdale, Craftsman Court between Third and Fifth Avenue, Third and Fifth Avenue from Scottsdale Road to Marshall Way, and Stetson Drive to Sixth Avenue.
- Tickets at [www.openairvents.com](http://www.openairvents.com)
- Tickets are \$35 adults over 21 years old. Live music, food and entertainment. A family-friendly event during the day, after 4 p.m. adults only.

#### Tempe Tostitos Fiesta Bowl Block Party

- 4 p.m. Dec. 31 at Tempe Beach Park and Mill Avenue, Tempe
- Tickets at [www.tostitosfiestabowl.com](http://www.tostitosfiestabowl.com)
- Tickets are \$15 advance purchase at Fry's Food Stores; \$20 day of event at the gate.
- Party will feature two national bands and 30 local bands. Food and beverage booths, interactive games for families and a fireworks display.

