

Oh, WHAT A NIGHT!

A COUNTDOWN OF THE TOP 10 REASONS
TO HOST YOUR WEDDING ON THE BIGGEST
PARTY NIGHT OF THE YEAR.

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MANY BRIDES dream of a sunny summer wedding—after all, June is the most popular month to get hitched. But lately it seems that more and more brides have been ditching the traditional and seeking something with a bit more flair. For these fun and adventurous couples, the perks of tying the knot on the last night of the year are proving too spectacular to resist.

From flowing champagne to glamorous décor, here are the top ten reasons New Year's Eve just may be the perfect time to say "I do."

10 ~ EVERYBODY LIKES A PARTY

Let's face it—everyone wants something fun to do on NYE—but no one really looks forward to a packed bar or an over-priced restaurant. "As we

were planning, we began to realize just how many people are looking for something special to do on New Year's Eve," says Brendan Stevenson of his year-end wedding to husband Andrew Shimek at Minneapolis' Guthrie Theater in 2013. "Everyone was so excited that it was going to be that night."

To ensure your nearest and dearest are on hand to celebrate your big day, give guests at least eight



FACING PAGES
Décor inspiration comes easy with a New Year's Eve wedding. Think confetti, gold and silver accents, sequins and glitter galore.



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months' notice, suggests Rachele Mazumdar, director of weddings and events at Minneapolis's Style-Architects and the planner behind Stevenson and Shimek's big day. In fact, for this date, she says, "you really can't send a save-the-date too early."

9 ~ CELEBRATE INTO THE WEE HOURS

Most weddings are wrapped up by midnight, but the 12 o'clock ball-drop means that a NYE event will keep rocking into, well, the next year (or at least the first 24 hours of it). "Generally, a venue will want you to wrap by 1," says Mazumdar. "That still gives you the opportunity to serve a champagne toast or an early-morning breakfast—something fun like a waffle bar or breakfast sandwiches—since most people are going to stay and party until after midnight."

8 ~ FLOWING BUBBLY

It should go without saying: A New Year's Eve wedding requires abundant champagne. In addition to the midnight toast, "greeting guests with a champagne pour when they arrive is beautiful and fun," says Ashley Ebert, expert planner and owner of the Simply Elegant Group in Minneapolis. "And small, personalized champagne bottles can also be festive favors or table numbers."

If serving champagne all evening is too much for your budget, cava, prosecco or even a fizzy cocktail will work just as well.

7 ~ NO NEED FOR A THEME

Go ahead, skip the agonizing step of deciding your wedding "theme" and head straight for the glitz and glamour. "There wasn't nearly as much pressure to come up with something on my own," says Laurel Ingle of her wedding to husband Tony on NYE 2014 at 514 Studios

OPPOSITE PAGE
*Let your New Year's Eve desserts shine.
 Think: a glittering cake topper and metallic
 cake stand, for starters.*

in Minneapolis. "It was easy to choose gifts and do fun things like a gold sequin backdrop for the photo booth."

From sparkly tablecloths to gilded candelabras, a touch of gold on your glassware to all-out glitter in your decorations, if you're ever going to throw a bash that sparkles and glows, New Year's Eve is certainly the night to do it. "A lot of the fun New Year's elements are already in a regular wedding, so this is really the time to just commit and go big," says Sarah Trotter, owner of Lasting Impressions Weddings in Minnetonka.

6 ~ SPARKLE AND SHINE

Toying with the idea of sequined bridesmaid dresses? Or a fun party dress for the reception? A New Year's Eve wedding is the ultimate occasion to pull it off. "The best part of New Year's is that you get to play, have fun and really show your personality," says Ebert. For Ingle, that license to break tradition meant going big with her gown. "It had gold sequins on the bust and a fun tulle skirt. I couldn't have worn it any other day of the year!"

5 ~ PUTTING ON THE RITZ

New Year's Eve can be one of the most glamorous nights of the year, when revelers up the ante for high-style parties and black-tie soirées. That same festive black-tie feel can easily extend to a NYE wedding. "Our guests loved that they were able to go out and get the kind of dress they would never wear to any other wedding," says Stevenson. "Because it was NYE, people had a runway to really flaunt their style and have fun."

4 ~ NO SET SCHEDULES

If the traditional order of events seems a bit too, well, traditional, you're in luck. "It can be a long night so the typical routine doesn't work very well for New Year's Eve," says Mazumdar. "I suggest mixing things up a bit. Start the evening at 5 or 6 o'clock. Give guests champagne as they enter the ceremony. Do the entire cocktail hour first and then go right into dinner after the ceremony. Or intersperse dancing with the dinner courses." The goal? Keep the energy high and the sitting to a minimum.

3 ~ A RESOLUTION FOR FUN

It's no secret that the New Year is a time to make resolutions and plans for the year ahead. Incorporate this NYE tradition with a new year's wishing well or resolution jar instead of a guest book, or turn it into something fun and interactive like having your guests write their resolutions on a chalkboard for the photo booth or, if your venue allows it, pinning their wish on a candlelit sky lantern and letting it float away into the night.

2 ~ COUNTDOWN CRESCENDO

There's no more festive time of the year than midnight on December 31st, especially surrounded by your closest family and friends. Party favors are a must, but if the



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typical 2016 glasses and hats are too tacky for your taste, Mazumdar suggests checking Etsy for chic versions to match your palette. Then add in some fun photo booth props, confetti poppers, simple party horns, tiaras and top hats.

1 ~ AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER

It's kind of symbolic, isn't it? Starting your new marriage right at the start of a brand-new year makes for two momentous occasions that go so perfectly together. The bonus? You'll never have an excuse to forget your anniversary—or be without a big bash to celebrate another year of wedded bliss. ✕

TIPS FOR A HOLIDAY CELEBRATION THAT SHINES

WHILE THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF A NEW YEAR'S EVE WEDDING MAY BE THE SAME AS AN EVENT ON ANY OTHER NIGHT OF THE YEAR, SOME DETAILS ARE UNIQUE TO THE REVELRY OF DECEMBER 31. READ ON FOR EXPERT TIPS TO HELP MAKE SURE YOUR NEW YEAR'S EVENT SPARKLES.

DON'T DELAY

Some locations can book up to a year or more in advance. But don't fret yet: Many gems are still available mere months before. "Everyone I know who has booked NYE has done it within a year, especially if it falls on a weeknight," says Mazumdar. The take-away? With a little flexibility and legwork, it's never too late to make your December 31 dreams come true.

BUDGET FOR THE BAR

Compared with typical weddings, people will drink more—and stay later—at New Year's Eve weddings, says Trotter. (It is the biggest party night of the year, after all.) So be sure to take the inflated bar tab into consideration when deciding what types of alcohol and how much to host throughout the evening.

EAT AND BE MERRY

More alcohol and a later night mean more food, more often. "Start the cocktail hour with heavy appetizers to make sure everyone kicks off the long night with something substantial to eat," says Ebert. As the evening progresses, offer late night snacks like mac and cheese or sliders, and consider sending partygoers home with a small box of cookies, doughnuts or other fun treat.

SEE THE SIGNS

"On New Year's Eve, signage is so important," says Mazumdar. "Let people know what's going to happen and when by outlining the schedule on a sign on an easel." Key items to note include when and where additional food will be served, what to expect for the New Year celebration and what is hosted at the bar.

SAFETY FIRST

New Year's Eve is notorious for treacherous roads and long cab waits. To keep guests safe and comfortable, choose a venue with a connected hotel or one within easy walking distance. For those who need to hit the road, consider arranging group transportation, or as Ebert suggests, hiring a service like Last Call Car Service to provide safe transportation home for both the guest and their car.

VENUES READY TO RING IN THE NEW YEAR

WHILE WE LOVE A BARN WEDDING OR VINEYARD BACKDROP IN THE SUMMER, NEW YEAR'S EVE CALLS FOR SOMETHING A BIT GRANDER. EACH OF THESE PARTY-PERFECT TWIN CITIES VENUES PRACTICALLY ENSURES A GLAMOROUS EVENT THAT, LIKE "AULD ACQUAINTANCES," WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN.

514 STUDIOS

This North Loop warehouse/photo studio offers a raw space that's ripe for dramatic lighting and glam NYE party touches—including the option to bring in your own booze. Minneapolis, 612.520.1514, 514studios.com

ARIA

Aria's soaring ceilings, crystal chandeliers, dramatic artwork and North Loop locale all combine to create a chic and modern setting perfect for a memorable NYE wedding. Minneapolis, 612.342.2742, ariampls.com

THE DEPOT

With two attached hotels, a downtown address and time-less elegance to spare, the Depot offers an unforgettable NYE party setting from dusk till dawn. Minneapolis, 612.758.7804, thedepotminneapolis.com

GUTHRIE THEATER

Only available a few weekends each year, the Guthrie offers unforgettable opportunities to play up the glamour and glitz of NYE like nowhere else. Minneapolis, 612.225.6470, guthrietheater.org

LANDMARK CENTER

Set in downtown St. Paul across from historic Rice Park, this architectural gem boasts a fairy-tale castle exterior, a dramatic central courtyard with a soaring five-story ceiling and a heavy dose of perfect-for-NYE sophistication. St. Paul, 651.292.3228, landmarkcenter.org

LE MÉRIDIEN CHAMBERS HOTEL

Contemporary and chic, this Minneapolis theater district hotel is right in the heart of the NYE action. Choose the Rooftop Lounge for both a glamorous setting and a bird's-eye view of the downtown revelry. Minneapolis, 612.215.3728, lemeridienchambers.com

MINNEAPOLIS EVENT CENTER

Set in picturesque St. Anthony Main and steps from the action of East Hennepin Avenue, this dramatic, open space combines historic beauty and vibrant location for a unique NYE event. Minneapolis, 612.564.3777, minneapoliseventcenters.com

SOLAR ARTS BY CHOWGIRLS

The industrial vibe of this funky yet elegant venue and the energy of its artsy Northeast Minneapolis neighborhood play up the festive energy of New Year's Eve. Minneapolis, 612.203.0786, chowgirls.net



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